

IRAN NEWS

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EDITORIAL

New Paykan Desirable If Well Designed

By March 1999 the country plans to send 100 thousand newly designed Paykans to the market each year.

Perhaps the best way to improve Iran's auto industry is to improve and update the design of domestic cars and, once this end is achieved, it will lead to improvements in the condition of car manufacturing and its side industries. But to achieve that target one must answer the following questions:

1. Based on the principle of economy of scale, will 100 thousand cars a year be profitable? If not, what justification do we have to make vehicles locally at a time when internationally reliable giants are manufacturing more than three million vehicles in a year?

2. Considering the low quality of domestically manufactured Paykans, will the change of design guarantee a better quality, and can the manufacturer assure the customers that these cars, like foreign cars, have special advantages and merits to offer?

3. Most reputable and famous carmakers joined other automakers, at least at the start of their operation, in the transfer of technology and marketing their vehicles. Taking into account the assurance given by Iran Khodro that the vehicle will be wholly manufactured in Iran, what guarantee can they give for competition with similar foreign makes within and outside the country?

4. What is the reason for insisting that the new Paykan will be 100 percent a domestic product at a time when no other vehicle producer is manufacturing all its parts domestically?

5. With an eye on the tariff supports launched to allow domestic cars to compete with foreign rivals, for example Pride which is traded at 7 thousand dollars abroad is sold at 12 thousand dollars domestically, how can such support be effective once the new Paykan hits the market, and since Iran intends to join the WTO, will we be able to compete with the auto industry giants in this crucial field?

Therefore, in order to expand and improve the domestic auto industry we must first make sure that it is economical to produce cars and after that make a careful plan to profit from the know-how and technology of well-established and experienced auto manufacturers.

In the meantime, due to special merits of Iranian economy, and the fact that Iran is rich in sources of raw material and has better means for manufacturing hardware compared to other nations involved in that field, only with a meticulous and correct planning can we emerge as a reliable vehicle manufacturer. Of course in the past few years by forming design and engineering companies and encouraging spare parts manufacturers we have made a desirable headway in that direction, but as long as these operations are without a fixed target and the relative

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Jannati Holds 'Salafis' Responsible for Dhahran Explosion

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK
TEHRAN - Substitute Friday prayer leader of Tehran Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati rejecting the unfounded accusations that Iran was involved in the Dhahran explosion, stressed that the blast was an internal issue in Saudi Arabia and that Riyadh had found no document yet to support Iran's involvement in the case.

He also cautioned the U.S. not to take any "insane course" against the sovereignty of Islamic Iran.

Ayatollah Jannati, who was speaking to multitudes of Friday prayer goers at Tehran University campus yesterday, gave a 99 percent probability that the explosion was carried out by the opposition group known as 'Salafis' (a Sunni opposition faction who strongly oppose the Saudi rule on the basis of ideological differences) who cannot any more stand the presence of the United States in



that country, IRNA reported.

Jannati further pointed out that the Saudi officials are fully aware of the fact, adding that however, the United States having some ulterior motives wants to somehow involve Iran in the Dhahran bombing.

"The U.S. is ignorant of this fact that by threatening the Islamic Republic of Iran, it would bear no other results than further infuriating the Iranian nation and height-

ening their hatred against that country," he said.

Ayatollah Jannati also praised the Iranian war disabled for their bravery during the eight-year Iraqi imposed war (1980-88) and said the people are indebted to martyrs, the disabled, their families and all those having played a significant role in the eight years of the Sacred Defense.

He stressed that it was a must that their problems be attended to and resolved, and expected that they be given full respect for the services they have rendered.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jannati slammed the Internet as a "poison" which could harm moral values in the Islamic Republic, saying access should be restricted to scientists.

"Unfortunately, some officials have also been swept away by the phenomenon and do not realize that the Internet is poisoning the people," he said.

"Use of the Internet should be limited to scientists and researchers," he said.

"We are not against the scientific use of the Internet but we must be careful because it is even more dangerous than poison, harming the opinions and morals of the Iranian people," he said.

Jannati criticized defenders of the Internet, saying it carries "pornographic songs and films."

Ayatollah Jannati extended his felicitations to the nation and the Muslim World on the approach of the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), the Twelfth Imam and rightful successor of the Prophet (S) Household which falls on December 24 this year and which also coincides with the eve of Christmas the birth anniversary of Prophet Jesus (A.S.). He also congratulated the Christians on the approach of Christmas (December 25).

'Nateq-Nouri's Visit to Moscow Important'

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK
TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmoud Vaezi met the members of Irano-Russian Parliamentary Friendship Group in Baku Thursday and explored ways and means of cooperation between the Iranian and Russian legislative powers.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister said that expansion of parliamentary cooperation between Iran and Russia would be important in promoting Tehran-Moscow ties and in raising mutual cultural intelligibility, therefore, exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two countries was a must in the direction of achieving that goal.

Vaezi continued that establishment of specialized commissions and committees comprising women deputies would be influential in leading the two sides toward the attainment of the goal.

Outlining the status of Tehran-Moscow ties at bilateral, regional and international levels, Vaezi said that Tehran-Moscow Joint Economic Cooperation Commis-

sion Session, which was held here recently, had paved the way for improvement of cooperation between the Iranian and Russian private and public sectors.

Vaezi added, quoted by IRNA, that the forthcoming visit to Tehran of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov would be a major step taken to consolidate bilateral political and economic cooperation.

The Russian members of Iranian-Russian parliamentary association, among whom members of various wings at Russian state Duma, for their part welcomed expansion of bilateral ties, espe-

cially the parliamentary ones, undeniably the importance of Iranian Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri's forthcoming visit to Russia.

They announced their readiness to do all within their power to promote mutual ties.

Yet in another meeting here on Thursday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalynk told Vaezi that he considered the imminent visit of Hojjatoleslam Nateq-Nouri to his country important.

At the meeting the two sides took up variety of topics pertaining bilateral cooperation and to

regional and international events and explored ways of expanding mutual cooperation.

Calling recent Tehran-Moscow Joint Economic Commission Session as "satisfactory", Vaezi expressed hope that the Moscow session would serve as an important step in expanding bilateral economic and commercial ties.

He said that forthcoming visit to Tehran of Primakov would avail both parties suitable opportunity to survey the quality of bilateral political cooperation in order to settle regional crises and exchange views on bilateral and international issues.

Rafsanjani's Turkey Visit 'Another Snub to U.S. Policy'

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - President Rafsanjani's visit to Turkey Thursday is seen in London as another blow to U.S. policy to isolate Iran and Washington's attempts to dictate foreign policy to other countries.

The Financial Times reported President Rafsanjani starting his four-day visit despite what it said was Washington's concern over growing ties between Ankara and Tehran.

It's expected that trade to be an important item on Rafsanjani's

agenda, with the aim of more than doubling annual trade between the two countries to \$2 billion, IRNA reported.

The trip was reported to have been criticized by U.S. State Department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, saying, "All of us need to isolate Iran, not bring it back into the family of nations."

The Guardian expected that relations between Ankara and Washington would "take another dive." It said Rafsanjani's visit represented "another strike" against the so-called U.S. dual containment policy.

It also reported the Turkish premier snubbing the EU by refusing to dine with its leaders at last week's Dublin Summit, ending the U.S.-led Operation Provide Comfort over Iraqi Kurdistan and requesting exemption from U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

In another development, Japanese dailies also in various feature reports published in Tokyo yesterday assessed that the official visit of President Rafsanjani leading a high-ranking delegation to Turkey as an important step toward cementing close relations between the two nations.

President Rafsanjani left Tehran for Turkey for a three-day official visit in return to the August visit of Turkish Premier Necmettin Erbakan to the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Last night was Yalda, the longest night of the year. An ancient Iranian tradition is for families to sit around the fireplace and have watermelons, pomegranates, nuts and dried fruit.

(Photo by Hatami)

کتابخانه ملی

IRAN DOMESTIC NEWS

Iran Offers to Mediate Between Ankara, Damascus

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK
ANKARA, TURKEY - Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said here Thursday that Iran has proposed to mediate between Turkey and Syria, and Turkey and Greece to settle their disputes.

He said the mediation was proposed by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in talks with his Turkish counterpart Suleyman Demirel on Thursday. Demirel has welcomed the Iranian offer, Velayati told reporters.

Turkey has also asked Iran to use its good office to help ease Athens-Ankara tension over the Cyprus issue, he said, adding that in his imminent visit to Greece he will raise the issue with the Greek officials.

Tehran and Ankara have mutually agreed not to allow any activity of the opposition elements in



VELAYATI

their territories, Velayati said. He said following the coming to office of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, Turkey has become seriously active in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Commenting on the new

grouping of eight developing countries, G-8, he said two sessions have already been held and the third meeting of the foreign ministers of Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Iran will be held in Istanbul early in January.

On agreements to be signed by the two countries during the visit, he said they include increasing the air links between the two countries, shipping and reduction of customs tariffs.

He said that Iran can purchase rice, sugar and paper from Turkey and Turkey can purchase manufactured goods, home appliances, oil and gas from Iran.

U.S. Objects to Improving Turkey-Iran Ties, Diplomats

Meanwhile, the United States

has expressed its "very serious reservations" over a rapprochement between Turkey and Iran, which Washington accuses of sponsoring terrorism, U.S. diplomats in Ankara said yesterday.

They said a U.S. diplomat went to the Turkish Foreign Ministry Thursday to warn of Washington's concern on the first day of an official four-day visit to Turkey by Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, according to AFP.

The United States has led an international campaign to isolate Iran, and objected strenuously when Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan went to Tehran in August.

Turkey, a member of NATO, and Iran said Thursday they wanted to improve bilateral cooperation, particularly in trade.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As many of our readers know already, the English translations of the verses of the Holy Quran, daily appearing here on this page, are taken from a brilliant poetic rendering by Prof. F. Nikayin. This is a continuing effort, and we shall resume the good work as soon as we are in possession of fresh material from the kind poet-translator. God bless.

PRAYER TIMES

Noon (Zohr)	12:03
Evening (Maghreb)	17:17
Tomorrow's Dawn (Fajr)	05:32
Tomorrow's Sunrise	07:11

Rafsanjani's Message Delivered to Aliyev

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Cultural and Islamic Guidance (Ershad) Minister Mostafa Mirsalim Thursday in Baku hand-delivered a message by Iran's President Hojatoleslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to Azerbaijan's President Geidar Aliyev.

The Azerbaijan's president told the Iranian envoy that Iran is a friendly neighbor to Azerbaijan, adding that his government looked forward to broadening relations with the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian envoy also said, quoted by IRNA, that the people of Iran and Azerbaijan had many cultural elements which, he said, could be utilized for further strengthening relations between the two neighboring countries.

The Iranian official also presented to the president of Azerbaijan a copy of the Azeri poems of contemporary Iranian poet Shahr-



ALIYEV

yar. The president of Azerbaijan referred to the Iranian poet as a scholar who, in his poems, had united Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, a cultural and artistic cooperation agreement was inked in Baku on Thursday between the Islamic Republic of



RAFSANJANI

Iran and Azerbaijan Republic.

The 17-article agreement was signed by Mirsalim and Azeri officials.

It involves celebration of cultural occasions, holding festivals and various seminars, setting up joint exhibitions and exchanging information on printed media.

Envisaged in the agreement is also the schedule of 24 cases of cooperation in the fields of culture and art for the next year.

Mirsalim told reporters that "it was the most important document of cooperation" ever signed between Iran and a newly independent republic of the ex-Soviet Union.

The minister emphasized the vast common grounds shared by Iran and Azerbaijan, saying that the deal paves the way for further expansion of relations, "in every field", between the two countries.

Mirsalim wound up his five-day visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan and left for home being seen off by his Azeri counterpart Poland Boulboul Oghlou.

Talking to reporters at Baku Airport, Mirsalim assessed outcome of his visit to the republic as positive.

Mirsalim arrived in Baku on Monday.

Faezeh Hashemi Meets Turkish Parliamentarian

IRAN NEWS PARLIAMENTARY DESK

TEHRAN - Ms. Faezeh Hashemi met with Ms. Imren Aykut, representative of the Motherland Party in the Turkish Parliament Thursday in Ankara.

The Iranian MP told MS, Aykut that for the past 17 years Iran has declared its opposition to terrorism.

Ms. Hashemi added that the last August visit of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to Tehran has opened a new chapter in Iran-Turkey relations.

She added, quoted by IRNA,

that the signing of the oil deal between Ankara and Tehran despite opposition of some countries demonstrated that nations can decide independently and pay no attention to foreign pressure.

Iran and Turkey last August signed the oil deal which will bring Iran more than 20 billion dollars of revenues within 22 years.

Ms. Aykut who was the first Turkish woman minister said that promotion of friendship between the two countries is to the interest of people of Turkey and Iran.

Primakov to Visit Iran Sunday



PRIMAKOV

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov

will pay a two-day official visit to Iran tomorrow, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement quoted by Itar-Tass news agency yesterday.

Russia and Iran signed a cooperation agreement earlier this month to develop ties in all sectors of industry, and especially oil and gas.

Tehran will buy Russian oil equipment worth up to \$800 million, and Iran will be able to pay off its \$600 million debt to Russia to oil over the next four years, Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov said.

In January 1995, Moscow and Tehran signed an agreement to complete a nuclear plant at Bushehr, on Iran's Persian Gulf coast. The United States has urged Moscow to abandon the project, saying it could bring Iran closer to building nuclear arms.

Kazakh Ulema Invited to Visit Iran

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iranian Ambassador to Almaty Hassan Qashqavi has called on Kazakh Mufti Haji Ratbeg Nesanbey Ogulu and Kazakh Ulema Board to pay an official visit to Iran in order to be acquainted with activities under way at the Iranian seminaries and to inspect tourist sites and pilgrim centers.

Ogulu, welcoming the invitation said that after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, more and more Muslim Kazakh people be-

gan paying attention to the practice of their religious rites and sagacious teachings of Islam.

The number of mosques has risen up to 5,000 in the republic as well, he said at a meeting with Qashqavi, according to IRNA. Ogulu said that Iranian and Kazakh nations shared deep religious, cultural, social and historical bonds and that all the potentials could be exploited to strengthen Tehran-Almaty ties.

He said he would provide all the facilities for construction of

mosques for the Iranians residing in Almaty, whose construction is to be financed by the Iranian traders and institutions.

Qashqavi briefed Ogulu on the activities of the Iranian seminaries and said there were many mosques in Iran belonging to the Sunni denomination.

He said that religious and historical aspects shared by the two countries could serve as a suitable ground for the expansion of bilateral ties and expressed hope that Iranian and Kazakh nations would

strive to promote yet closer cordial bilateral relations in light of the their commonalities, especially the noble religion of Islam.

Iran's Ambassador Confers with Greek Officials

IRAN NEWS POLITICAL DESK

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador to Greece Mahdi Khandaqabadi in two separate meetings in Athens on Wednesday with the Greek Minister of Public Order George Romeos and the head of the Greek Center for Encouragement of Exports, Youvanice Jen, discussed Iran-Greece bilateral relations.

Tehran-Athens expansion of bilateral relations as well as political and economic cooperation were reviewed at the meetings, IRNA reported.

Quake Jolts Shahrud

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - An earthquake measuring 3.8 degrees on the open-ended Richter scale shook the city of Shahrud in Semnan Province at 23:38 hours local time Wednesday.

The seismological base of Te-

Drug Smuggling Gang Destroys, 771kg Narcotics Sized

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK

TEHRAN - Members of a narcotics smuggling gang were arrested by the provincial law enforcement forces over the past few days in Kerman.

Head of the ideological-political department at the provincial

Law Enforcement Department, Kazem Tabatabaie said in Kerman Thursday that 50 kg of opium and five vehicles had been confiscated from the seven-member gang.

Meanwhile, 167 kg of various kinds of narcotics were seized in Yazd during the past few days, the deputy coordinator of the political and ideological department of the Yazd provincial law enforcement forces, Colonel Mashallah Farajpour, said Wednesday.

He added that the quantity of narcotics was seized while searching the vehicles in the vicinity of the capital city of Yazd, IRNA reported.

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DOMESTIC ECONOMY NEWS



Iranian Gas to Reach Turkey Soon, Aqazadeh

By S. Babran

ANKARA, TURKEY - In an exclusive interview with IRAN NEWS yesterday, Iran's Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh, referring to the Iran-Turkish gas deal said: "Construction of the gas pipeline will start from both sides in March 1997, and from 1998 Iranian gas will be exported to Izmir."

He added that in order to transport Turkmen gas to Europe, it was also agreed that the trilateral Iran-Turkey-Turkmenistan meeting be held in the next 10 days in Tehran.

As regards the Turkish gas pipeline tender, the minister added, "We have suggested to Turkey that they invite Iranian contractors who possess high potential and experience for the job."

Pointing out that despite foreign pressure to disrupt the agreement, Turkey was determined to carry on with the project, Aqazadeh further said, "Since Turkey needs energy, it can not undermine its national interests because of other countries' views."

Iran Day Marked in Colombia by Introduction of Iranian Carpet

NEW YORK, U.S.A. (IRNA) - Colombia's International Handicrafts Fair commemorated Iran Day by introducing the hand-woven carpet of Iran to Colombian officials and ambassadors of other countries at a ceremony held in Bogota on Tuesday.

Iranian Ambassador to Colombia Hussein Sheikh Zeinoddin addressing the audience at the sixth day of the international fair, expressed hope that the Iranian Carpet Joint Stock Company's presence at the Colombian exhibition, would serve as a prelude to the enhancement of commercial activities between the two countries and to the marketing of the highest quality and most famous traditional goods of Iran in Colombia.

Meanwhile, managing director of the Iranian company, Mohammad Reza Abed, said that Iran Day was commemorated at the fair with such an aim to introduce the best hand-woven Iranian carpet to the world.

Abed was jubilant that Iranian carpet had once again regained its status in Colombia.

He expressed hope that his company would succeed in introducing the Iranian carpet and rendering valuable services to consumers on the commodity by making them aware of the superiority of the quality of Iranian carpets in relation to carpets made elsewhere.

Mahlouji Meets Italian Minister

ROME, ITALY (IRNA) - Italian minister of foreign trade, Agosto Fantozzi, said here Wednesday that the Islamic Republic of Iran should be proud of its overall development.

Making the remark in a meeting with the visiting Iranian minister of mines and metals, Hussein Mahlouji, Fantozzi added that reports made by international bodies indicate Iran's great achievements in various areas of economy and industry.



Problems concerning Iran's debts have been entirely removed, he said, calling for further promotion of Tehran-Rome relations in economic and investment areas.

Mahlouji arrived here Wednesday on a three-day visit to sign an agreement on the sale of the right of Iran's sponge iron producing project of Qaem to Italy.

Rafsanjani Inspects Gas Pipeline in Turkey

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK
ANKARA, TURKEY - The visiting Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said yesterday that a bright future was awaiting the people of Shanlı Uf'a.

Addressing a large crowd of local people who had gathered at the airport to greet him in the city, Rafsanjani said the gas pipeline for transfer of Iranian natural gas to Turkey which will pass through Shanlı Uf'a, in southeastern Turkey, will help develop the region.

President Rafsanjani thanked the local people for their sentiments and warm welcome.

He later inspected the agro-industrial project on board a helicopter.

President Suleyman Demirel who was accompanying his Iranian counterpart during the inspection tour of the giant project in southeastern Turkey, said with the completion of the project people and the region will prosper in the next 10 years.

Iranian Foodstuff Exports to Japan Jumps to \$200m Annually

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran exports \$200 million worth of dried fruits and agricultural products to Japan annually whilst the annual imports of Japan is over \$51 billion on foodstuffs, said vice chairman of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce Industries and Mines, Asadollah Asgaroladi, here on Wednesday.

Asgaroladi said that the Export Promotion Center in cooperation with Japan's External Trade Organization 'Jetro', and the Japanese Industrial and Foodstuff Association, is holding a seminar to study ways to boost the export of Iranian fruits, vegetables and dried fruits to Japan.

Iran's agricultural exports to Japan could increase in view of the quality and hygienic control of foodstuffs, he added.

He said the Iranian Chamber of Commerce and all the affiliated organizations active in export of foodstuffs are ready to provide businessmen and trading companies with the necessary information in this regard.

In this gathering some representatives of the Japanese Foodstuff Association provided the essential information on foodstuff consumption as well as the marketing possibilities in Japan.

Textile Industry Woes: Distribution, Lack of Credit

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK
TEHRAN - "Distribution is the most important problem facing the country's textile industry, and the cause of it is the traditional distribution system prevalent in the market," said Rahim Bana Mowlace.

Speaking at a press conference here yesterday Managing Director of Rey Spinning and Weaving Company (RSWC), Mowlace, further added that in order to bring down production costs, some of the bigger companies have to overproduce which leads to profiteering by some of bazar traders and businessmen.

Mowlace said that unlike last year the banking system does not invest in the country's industries at all, "according to the laws of Iran's Economic Council enacted in 1995, it was agreed that RSWC be given a credit of about 28 billion rials, but nothing has been done so far."

He said RSWC's tools and machinery are about 70 years old and in order to increase production, new machinery must be installed at RSWC as well as in all similar factories.

According to Mowlace the factory produced 21 million sq.m of

cloth in 1995 and plans to keep the same production level this year, "But from 1998 this rate will be increased to 30 million square meters per year which would cover about six percent of the country's requirements."

Pointing out that RSWC's sales in 1995 reached 45 billion rials with 750 million rials in profits, Mowlace added that the company's profits will reach five billion rials by the end of this year. "This means an increase in value of the factory's shares from 1,100 to 5,000 rials," he said.

Iranian Export Challenges the U.S. Over Nuclear Safety

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK
TEHRAN - What follows is the fourth part of Dr. Meshkati's interview with IRAN NEWS. The third part appeared in last Thursday's issue of the newspaper.

Dr. Meshkati has published a seminal and highly visible letter to the editor of the New York Times newspaper on May 7, 1995 coo-

cerning the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant which he provided the IRAN NEWS with a copy. Here are some excerpts from Dr. Meshkati's New York Times piece which explain his unique thesis:

Iran, determined to develop her nuclear energy option, acquiring components for nuclear reactor

Malaysian Company to Build 2 Passenger Ships for Iran

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA (IRNA) - A Malaysian ship-construction company is to design and build two passenger ships for Iran in southern Iranian city of Khorramshahr.

In a ceremony held here on Wednesday, Head of the Company Amin Shah Omar said that

5 Road-Building Projects Under Way

KERMAN (IRNA) - Projects are under way for construction of five roads in this southeastern province at a cost of 1.04 billion rials.

Head of the Construction Jihad

'Berelyan' and 'Zomorad', the two ships to be built by his company for Iran, would run with the capacity of carrying 400 passengers and with a speed ranging from 43 to 45 knots.

Omar said that Australian government had allocated \$1.6 million for research activities and expansion of his company.

office at the provincial city of Zaranj, Abolqassem Seyfollahi, said here Thursday that over 2,400 families would be provided with proper roads once the 130-km roads become operational.

Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan Hold Tripartite Meeting

MOSCOW, RUSSIA (IRNA) - Delegations from Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan met here Wednesday to exchange views on the formation of a joint oil company to develop the Caspian Sea oil fields.

Iran's deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs, Mahmoud Vaezi, and his Russian and Turkmen counterparts, Boris Pasykhov and Yag Myr Kychymov, respectively, headed the delegations.



New LCs to Be Opened by Tehran and Ankara, Nourbakhsh

By S. Babran

ANKARA, TURKEY - "Iran has no overdue payments to Turkey, and new letters of credit will be opened soon," Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Mohsen Nourbakhsh told IRAN NEWS yesterday.

He said Iran-Turkish banking cooperation was among the topics discussed during his meetings with Turkish officials, adding, "Fortunately Iran has no overdue payments to Turkey since they have been rescheduled."

Nourbakhsh said providing mutual credit by the two countries aimed at expanding trade between Tehran and Ankara was also among the topics discussed in the meetings.

"Mr. Hashemi's proposal that some reciprocal banking credit plans be supported by the two sides' banking establishments was discussed," the CBI governor said, adding that if mutually agreed upon, an official agreement in this regard would be signed between the two sides.

MJF Purchases 100 Tank Cars to Carry Acid

TEHRAN (IRNA) - The eastbound railroad network affiliated to the Mustazafan and Janbazan Foundation (MJF) has purchased 100 tank wagons suitable for the transportation of sulfuric acid from the Republic of Ukraine at the cost of 10

billion rials, announced by the public relations department of the foundation here Wednesday.

The report said the capacity of the sulfuric tank cars are 58 tons. So far the first delivery of 23 tanks have been made through Turkmenistan-Sarakhs railroad customs, and the remaining 77 are expected to be delivered shortly via the same route.

In the first phase, these cars will convey sulfuric acid produced at Razi Petrochemical Plant in Khuzestan Province to the copper manufacturing sector of Sarcheshmeh in Kerman Province.

Foreign Exchange Rates

IRAN NEWS ECONOMIC DESK

TEHRAN - The following are the foreign exchange rates in rials as released by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday.

COUNTRY	UNIT	Floating Rates		Export Rates	
		SELLING	BUYING	SELLING	BUYING
Australia	dollar	1,395	1,387	2,393	2,381
Austria	schilling	161	160	277	275
Belgium	(100)francs	5,513	5,482	9,458	9,411
Canada	dollar	1,287	1,229	2,208	2,197
Denmark	krone	297	295	509	507
France	franc	336	334	576	574
Germany	mark	1,136	1,130	1,949	1,939
Italy	(100)liras	115	114	197	196
Japan	(100)yen	1,545	1,536	2,651	2,637
Netherlands	guilder	1,011	1,005	1,734	1,726
Sweden	krone	259	257	443	441
Switzerland	franc	1,330	1,322	2,281	2,270
U.K.	pound	2,927	2,910	5,021	4,996
U.S.	dollar	1,755	1,750	3,015	3,000
U.A.E.	dirham	479	476	804	802

Handwritten text in Persian script, likely a signature or stamp.

IRAN NEWS

WORLD



well-being in the corporate world. The essential message is that profitability does not have to hinge on a winner-loser situation.

Chopra had no qualms about admitting he makes more money than ever -- his usual fee is \$25,000 for a three-hour lecture. He is mulling a Broadway musical for children based on the Way of the Wizard and is planning another five to six books, including one on death.

Is the soul man afraid of dying? "No, I don't think so. If you are aware death is stalking you all the time, your life would be magical because your priorities will change."

A suitable epitaph, he said, would be: "Deepak Chopra, a Good Father."

"I feel very grateful to my family and to my children, particularly, who have never taken me seriously -- it keeps me feeling grounded," he said.

The letter was signed by former secretaries of state James A. Baker III, Cyrus R. Vance and Lawrence S. Eagleburger; former National Security Advisers Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft and Frank Carlucci, and former Mideast Mediators Robert Strauss and Richard Fairbanks.

involved to follow that policy," he said.

The State Department has called on the armed rebels to release the hostages and has condemned their actions as a "shameful act of violence and terrorism."

U.S. officials have been unable to assert whether the rebels have received foreign backing despite claims that Cuba helped establish the Leftist Movement in the early 1980s.

Democratic coalition government was overthrown by Rakhmanov's Moscow-backed neo-Communist forces.

In recent weeks the rebels, operating from bases in northern Afghanistan and the remote Gorno-Badakhshan region of eastern Tajikistan, have captured a string of towns and villages, pushing west as far as 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Dushanbe.

Tens of thousands of Tajiks were killed in a civil war that raged before Rakhmanov seized power.

second area is the purchase of 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas. These are the bases of expansion.

advantages remain unexplored, we will not achieve our final goal.

In conclusion one must mention that Daewoo of South Korea, which began manufacturing cars several years after Iran Khodro, is now selling millions of cars annually after Iran Khodro, is now selling millions of cars whereas we are still by making superior quality cars whereas we are still stalled at a meager 100 thousand poor quality autos a year.

Therefore, to be successful in manufacturing and marketing our automobiles we should do extensive research on the world's well-known car manufacturers and also learn from our own past experiences in this field.

sion of trade between Iran and Turkey and we hope that this kind of cooperation will continue in future.

Q: Several countries have privately expressed concern over the export of Iranian gas to Turkey. Can you tolerate the pressure and continue the gas project with Iran?

A: Of course, we made the commitment in 1995. When I was the prime minister we signed the agreement. We believe that anything based on the mutual benefits of the two countries should be welcomed and energy is one of the specific areas we can cooperate in. This level of ties is based on our national interests.

Q: Is there any possibility of a defense alliance between Iran and Turkey?

A: That needs to be examined by the concerned ministers. Of course the high level of defense cooperation between the two countries should also be reviewed by their security councils, but we believe that starting the cooperation should be in the trade area.

Q: What specific role do you suggest for Irano-Turkish cooperation to promote regional peace and stability, particularly in Afghanistan and Central Asian republics?

A: Of course, we should try to bring solidarity and peace to the region specially in Afghanistan. We have already volunteered to invite Afghanistan for peace talks to our country, and we believe that holding such a mutual conference could contribute to peace. Therefore, Turkey is ready to do whatever is necessary to bring peace to the regions of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Afghanistan and even Iraq.

Q: Do you have any plan for the expansion of ECO?

A: Yes, as you know Iran, Pakistan and Turkey are the founding members of ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization). We try to increase our contributions and cooperation to expand trade in the area and among the member states.

Q: Do you have any plans to increase the number of ECO member states?

A: This issue does not concern Turkey alone. It needs a mutual agreement among the member states. Therefore, we have to look at the point together.

their role in maintaining and reinforcing peace and stability in the region and the world. "For this very reason, Turkey attaches special importance to upgrading political, economic, technical and cultural relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The two presidents also discussed the Cyprus issue and the tension between the Turkish and Greek communities, the Karabakh dispute and the need to settle the dispute between Turkey and Greece.

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In conclusion one must mention that Daewoo of South Korea, which began manufacturing cars several years after Iran Khodro, is now selling millions of cars annually after Iran Khodro, is now selling millions of cars whereas we are still by making superior quality cars whereas we are still stalled at a meager 100 thousand poor quality autos a year.

Therefore, to be successful in manufacturing and marketing our automobiles we should do extensive research on the world's well-known car manufacturers and also learn from our own past experiences in this field.

President Rafsanjani said that Tehran because of its good relations with Ankara and Athens is willing to offer its mediation to help settle the dispute between the two countries.

He said his views were identical or closely similar to President Demirel's on various issues including regional security and security of the borders between Iran and Turkey.

President Demirel said terrorism was an international issue and both countries had reiterated their commitment to decisions adopted by the United Nations against terrorism.

He said a number of economic and environmental agreements had been signed between the two countries during President Rafsanjani's visit to Ankara.

Nothing Will Be Allowed to Damage Friendly Relations

President Rafsanjani, speaking at a dinner banquet hosted in his honor by President Suleyman Demirel Thursday said that after the 1979 victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Tehran-Ankara relations have grown stronger in political, economic, security and cultural fields.

He said both countries are determined to double the volume of bilateral trade, adding that an annual \$2 billion trade volume is not only an attainable target but prospects for technical, industrial and agricultural potentials provide further grounds for cooperation.

President Rafsanjani also said that one of the main principles of foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is promoting regional cooperation aimed at creating peace and stability.

Joint efforts of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan as the founding members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) have resulted in growing regional cooperation, and membership of seven more countries in ECO has increased optimism of regional states in ECO's ability to reach its objectives, Rafsanjani said.

He referred to the prevailing unjust order in the world and said it brings pain to the hearts of all freedom-loving people.

With firm belief in establishment of a just order in international relations in all dimensions, and establishment of friendly relations with other countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been ready to help eliminate discrimination against the oppressed nations, he added.

The Iranian President said with the establishment of Iran-Turkey chamber of commerce and reduction in customs tariffs, conditions will be created for increased bilateral cooperation.

President Demirel said that Ankara was ready to cooperate with Iran to resolve regional crises including the critical situation in Northern Iraq and Afghanistan, adding that developments in Central Asia and the Caucasus have created appropriate opportunities for Irano-Turkish cooperation at regional level.

He praised the outstanding economic and industrial achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in recent years and said that Iranian engineers and experts deserve much praise for the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajik railway.

He further stressed implementation of the pipeline project for transfer of Iranian natural gas to Turkey, which he said is of great significance for Ankara.

"Our response to those who criticize Turkey for purchasing Iranian gas is that Turkey is an

independent country and is determined to further increase its cooperation with Iran," said President Demirel, stressing that Turkey is impatiently awaiting the completion of this major project and considers it to be highly beneficial to both countries.

President Demirel also said that expansion of transportation network between the two countries and the revival of the Silk Road will help promote Tehran-Ankara ties.

The first round of talks were attended by Cabinet ministers and officials of the two countries.

President Rafsanjani Receives Turkish PM and FM

President Hashemi Rafsanjani on Thursday received Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and Foreign Minister Mrs. Tansu Ciller.

Erbakan told reporters after the meeting that President Rafsanjani's visit was a source of pride for Turkey and its people. He said he continued his economic, political and trade discussions with President Rafsanjani.

The Turkish prime minister said the Irano-Turkish gas joint venture will be instrumental in the development of Turkey's eastern and southeastern provinces, and emphasized the positive impact of Tehran-Ankara cooperation on the region as a whole.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and Road and Transport Minister Akbar Tokkan were present when President Rafsanjani received Mrs. Ciller.

She outlined Turkey's position on the regional crises and called for continued cooperation of Iran and Turkey in easing these crises.

President Rafsanjani and his accompanying delegation yesterday visited Izmir and inspected several economic and cultural centers of the city.

hiko Ikeda met Fujimori yesterday in Lima and delivered a letter from Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, officials said.

Kyodo news, quoting Japanese sources in Lima, said that Ikeda was likely to meet Fujimori a second time in an effort to avert force being used to break the hostage standoff.

Some foreign ministers, including German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, have called on Ikeda to ask Peru not to use force to break the standoff, the Foreign Ministry said.

The Mainichi Shimbun said in an editorial yesterday: "The settlement is not easy as countries concerned have different stances and ways of thinking."

Newspapers also said Tokyo may face difficulties in coordinating with other countries concerned, such as the United States, over ways to settle the crisis.

The Sanki Shimbun reported that the U.S. has told the Japanese Foreign Ministry not to give in easily, demanding that Tokyo take action in Lima in accordance with the U.S. line.

"The United States recognizes that it would be them, not Japanese, who suffer damage in the future if Japan moves toward giving in to terrorism," a Japanese ministry official was quoted as saying.

On Wednesday, Hashimoto asked the Peruvian government to give priority to the safety of the hostages.

"I would like you to give the maximum attention to the safety of the hostages," he was quoted as

telling Fujimori over the telephone.

Meanwhile, the Peruvian government has decided to reject rebel demands to free their jailed comrades in exchange for the lives of some 400 hostages, a local radio station said yesterday.

The government's stand was apparently reached during a Cabinet meeting early yesterday. Radioprogramas Del Peru said.

The ministers "totally rejected" the demands of the leftist Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) that their leader, Victor Polay Campos, and some 400 comrades be released from jail, sources close to the government told the radio.

The ministers also upheld Fujimori's decision to continue negotiations with the hostage-takers, the sources added.

The rebels have threatened to kill the hostages, beginning with a Japanese diplomat, if their demands are not met.

Israelis, Palestinians Protest Housing in E. Jerusalem

JERUSALEM - Hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians joined forces yesterday to demonstrate against Israeli plans to build a Jewish compound in the middle of an Arab neighborhood in disputed East Jerusalem.

"We will never let this settlement be built," Yossi Sarid, leader of Israel's left-wing Meretz Party, told the crowd of about 500 gathered at the proposed building site in East Jerusalem's Ras al-Amud neighborhood.

"To build a Jewish neighborhood in the middle of East Jerusalem is a stupidity, it is a bone in the throat and will destroy relations between Israelis and Palestinians," he said.

The Interior Ministry in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government last week gave initial approval for the project to build 132 luxury homes in Ras al-Amud, where 11,000 Palestinians live.

Israel Welcomes Ross Mission, Palestinians Chafe at U.S. Criticism JERUSALEM - Israel yesterday welcomed a new U.S. initiative to break the deadlock in peace negotiations but Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat warned he would resist any U.S. effort to force concessions from his side.

U.S. officials said Middle East envoy Dennis Ross would return to Israel today in a new bid to mediate an agreement on Israel's long-overdue troop withdrawal from the volatile West Bank town of Hebron.

"We welcome his trip and we welcome the continued U.S. efforts to facilitate the negotiations, which have dragged on for three months," said Israeli government spokesman Moshe Vogel.

But Arafat, on his return to Gaza City from a brief foreign tour, was more wary in the light of U.S. statements indirectly blaming the Palestinians for the impasse on Hebron.

"The most important thing is that Ross has to be accurate, an accurate mediator, and not to be biased to the side of Israel," he told reporters.

Earlier yesterday in Cairo, Arafat warned, "If the Israeli government stays intransigent, there will be no hope of reaching a

solution that is satisfactory for the Palestinians and capable of establishing peace in the region."

Netanyahu Aide Goes to Court Against Oslo Accords

JERUSALEM - A recently named science adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hucked his boss to file a High Court petition claiming the government's continued implementation of the Oslo peace accords is illegal, the Maariv newspaper reported yesterday.

Israel Hazzukoglu, a controversial geneticist who claims Palestinians are only recent immigrants to the lands now comprising Israel and the occupied territories, was one of eight scientists who petitioned the court, it said.

"To their complaint, the eight said the Netanyahu government is violating Israeli law by applying the interim autonomy accords signed with the Palestinians," Maariv said.

The petition, submitted this week, calls on the High Court to issue restraining orders prohibiting the government from transferring control over any more land to the Palestinian Authority of Yasser Arafat or from beginning negotiations on a final status for the territories as called for in the Oslo Accords.

Palestinians Protest UNRWA Aid Decrease

TYRE, LEBANON - Hundreds of Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon staged yesterday a sit-in, the third in less than a month, to protest against the decrease of aid granted by the UNRWA.

More than 1,500 men, women and children gathered in front of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) headquarters at the Burj Shemali shantytown, east of the southern port of city of Tyre.

Two-Thirds of Israelis Unhappy with Netanyahu

JERUSALEM - More than two-thirds of Israelis are unhappy with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's style of governing, according to an opinion poll published yesterday.

The survey published by the mass circulation Yediot Aharanot showed that 68 percent of those queried said they were not satisfied with the government's decision-making progress under Netanyahu, while 30 percent said they were pleased.

Six months after Netanyahu took office at the head of a coalition of right-wing and religious parties, 58 percent of respondents said the prime minister was doing a poor job, compared to 40 percent who rated his performance good or very good.

Of those who voted for Netanyahu, 23 percent said they regretted their choice. Netanyahu beat incumbent Labor Prime Minister Shimon Peres for the top government post by less than one percent of votes cast.

The survey was conducted among 504 Israelis and had a margin of error of four percent.

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SFOR Replaces IFOR

SARAJEVO (AFP) - NATO's first ever ground mission, the peace implementation force (IFOR) in Bosnia, ended yesterday when it banded over to its scaled-down successor, the Stabilization Force (SFOR).

At a base in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, the IFOR flag was lowered and replaced by that of SFOR.

The ceremony took place in the presence of NATO's supreme commander in Europe, General George Joulwan, and the new force's commander, General William Crouch.

Bidding farewell to IFOR troops, Joulwan said: "You have made history, you have crossed the line... the 37th cease-fire has held... the killing has stopped."

He told Crouch and those troops remaining in the new force, "your mission is clear. You are here to preserve the peace, not to play the war."

SFOR is smaller than the 60,000-strong IFOR. It will initially have about 38,000 men which will be cut back to 31,000 — its official size — after municipal elections next year. Its mandate is for 18 months.

Officials from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization believe that the Implementation Force

notched up considerable successes during its one-year term.

The force, comprising troops of 36 countries, helped stop the fighting in Bosnia and prise the warring

fused to launch man-hunts for some 66 war crimes suspects still at liberty wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague.



BELGRADE, SERBIA, YUGOSLAVIA: A Serb policeman stops demonstrators from marching on the home of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic during another day of anti-government demonstrations in Belgrade Dec. 19.

(AFP Photo)

factions apart, to allow the more difficult political and civilian aspects of the peace process to begin.

However, IFOR drew repeated criticism for interpreting its mandate narrowly.

The force failed to guarantee freedom of movement to allow refugees to return home and re-

But with the situation still tense on the ground and war crimes suspects at large, it remains to be seen whether SFOR will be able to bring true, lasting peace to a republic still traumatized by nearly four years of conflict, and still driven by ethnic rivalry.

S.Korea's Scandal-Tainted Cabinet Reshuffled

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA (Reuters) - South Korean President Kim Young-Sam reshuffled his scandal-tainted Cabinet yesterday, introducing new faces to polish his government's image as it heads into a presidential election year.

A spokesman for the presidential Blue House announced a string of new appointments at a number of ministries, including the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy.

Changes at economy-related ministries appear designed to deflect public criticism of government policy amid an economic slowdown caused by plunging exports.

Also changing are the heads of the National Police Administration and National Security Council, underlining Kim's pre-election law-

and-order drive and his efforts to beef up the country's defenses against the North Korean threat.

The spokesman said the reshuffle was prompted by the appointment of an ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which Seoul joined this month, that job will be taken by Koo Bohn-Young, current minister of science and technology.

The OECD appointment allowed Kim to drop his trade minister, who has been in the hot seat this year as the trade deficit balloons.

It also gave the president a chance to rejuvenate a Cabinet rocked by scandals involving two ministers.



South Korean Cabinet members

Sri Lanka's Tiger Rebels Kill 11 in Ambush

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA (AFP) - Tamil Tiger rebels fired rocket propelled grenades and ambushed an army convoy in north-eastern Sri Lanka yesterday, killing 10 soldiers and a civilian, local officials said.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the military convoy in the district of Anuradhapura and destroyed four armored trucks and a motorcycle, officials said.

They said 12 other soldiers escaped with serious injuries.

"A civilian woman who was traveling with the troops was also killed," an official said, adding that it was routine for troops to provide armed escort to civilians who are targeted by the Tigers.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that troop reinforcements engaged the guerrillas but gave no details of the guerrilla casualties.

Three days ago, the LTTE staged a spectacular suicide attack to assassinate a top police commander in the eastern region of Ampara, a week after overrunning a commando base and killing 39 troopers.

Tiger guerrillas are leading a drawn out campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions, where the Tamil minority of two million is concentrated.

Rival Partymen Demand Execution of Bhutto's Jailed Husband



BENAZIR BHUTTO
KARACHI, PAKISTAN (AFP) - Political allies of slain Pakistani politician Murtaza Bhutto called yesterday for the execution of deposed Premier Benazir Bhutto's husband, who has been arrested in connection with their leader's September murder.

"Zardari be hanged publicly," Kausar Zaidi, former personal secretary to Murtaza Bhutto said. Only after the execution of Zardari could the soul of his comrade rest in peace, he said.

Murtaza Bhutto, the estranged brother of former Prime Minister

Benazir Bhutto, was killed in a police shoot-out in Karachi on September 20. His party has accused Bhutto's spouse of being party to a conspiracy to murder his brother in law.

Police on Thursday formally charged Zardari on a complaint lodged by Murtaza's companion, Nur Muhammad.

Murtaza's party has also demanded the trial of Syed Abdullah Shah, former chief minister of Bhutto's home province of Sindh, as well as ex-Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar, in connection with the shooting in which Murtaza and seven comrades were killed.

Murtaza Bhutto fell out with his sister over the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and formed his own PPP (Shahed Bhutto) faction.

Benazir Bhutto has strongly denied the involvement of her husband in Murtaza's death.

Attacking President Farooq

Ahmed Leghari, who sacked her on November 5 on allegations of corruption and lawlessness, she



MURTAZA BHUTTO

said yesterday that Zardari had been booked on "false charges" to put pressure on her.

Police have already arrested five senior police officers, including a former chief of the intelligence bureau, in addition to 11 other low ranking police officers in the Murtaza murder case.

Zardari has been kept in a police station, heavily guarded by security forces deployed in armored vehicles. Police said he is due to be produced in a local court today for judicial remand.

Revolt in Dhaka Jail Repulsed, as Prison Rebellion Spread

DHAKA, BANGLADESH (AFP) - The Bangladesh authorities ordered a security clampdown at all the country's overcrowded prisons yesterday after a major jail revolt spread to three other facilities, leaving scores injured.

Prisoners tried twice yesterday to take over Dhaka's top-security central jail as well, but were repulsed by baton wielding police and wardens, witnesses and residents said.

The prisoners in Dhaka first tried to break out of their cells at around breakfast time, but were forced back by police in a baton charge, a resident said. A second break was similarly foiled, and security at the jail has been tightened, according to police at the scene.

The jail, surrounded by hundreds of residential and commercial buildings in central Dhaka, holds some 6,000 prisoners, almost three times its capacity, official sources said.

The inmates include several of Bangladesh's most notorious criminals and some former army officers arrested recently for their alleged involvement in a 1975 coup.

The Dhaka jail was the fourth in the country to face a revolt since 2,700 prisoners in the western city of Jessore surprised authorities Monday by taking control of their prison.

The Jessore uprising began as a protest over food. Inmates later demanded to meet Home Ministry officials to present their demands for shorter sentences and faster trials.

Overcrowding is also a major problem in Bangladeshi jails: according to Home Ministry figures, in July there were 46,280 prisoners in jails with a capacity of 21,620.

The prisoners at Jessore were still in control yesterday, and have now dug "bunkers" inside the prison. They held a noisy torchlight march on the prison rooftop Thursday night.

At Tangail, in northern Bangladesh, the jail was tense yesterday a day after 600 inmates took three guards and a medical assistant hostage and then seized control of the prison, a local official said.

The rebel prisoners have now been surrounded by security forces, and a standoff has ensued, the official said. Reports said there was no immediate plan to move against the 600 rebels, who live in space built for 319.

Police and wardens Thursday

Yeltsin to Return to Kremlin Monday



MOSCOW, RUSSIA (AFP) - Russian President Boris Yeltsin will return to the Kremlin on Monday, six weeks after his heart surgery, Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky announced yesterday.

Yeltsin, 65, will leave the government residence at Zavidovo, 100 kilo-

suppressed a third revolt in the southern town of Barisal. Official sources said around 150 people, including 30 guards, were injured in the assault, several badly. Forty guards taken hostage were freed.

Official sources said the authorities in the country's four central jails, 16 district jails and 46 sub-jails have been put on top alert to stop the unrest from spreading further.

Unconfirmed reports from the southeastern port of Chittagong said attempted protests there were thwarted by the authorities.

In Jessore, which is surrounded by 2,000 police and paramilitary forces, the jail remained tense yesterday as the government pursued attempts to negotiate a solution.

Yeltsin, 65, will leave the government residence at Zavidovo, 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Moscow, for the capital today or Sunday, Yastrzhembsky told reporters.

Yeltsin will spend the first few days back at work familiarizing himself in detail with the political situation and meeting colleagues, including presidential Chief of Staff Anatoly Chubais and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the spokesman said.

The Russian leader, who underwent a quintuple heart bypass operation on November 5, has been recovering at Zavidovo since December 9.

Yastrzhembsky rejected rumors that Yeltsin would make personnel changes immediately after his return to work.

Earlier, a Kremlin official told Itar-Tass news agency that Yeltsin was due to make a statement on television yesterday, concerning his return to the Kremlin scheduled for next week.

Humanitarian Check

Indonesia's New Ta

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Humanitarian Agencies Grieve Over Chechen Slayings

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND (AFP) - Hundreds of humanitarian agency workers took to the streets of Geneva in an outpouring of grief and anger yesterday over the murder of six Red Cross colleagues in Chechnya.

The mourners, many holding red roses, gathered outside the United Nations complex in a show of solidarity before marching silently to the headquarters of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to place the flowers.

"We stand together today to condemn this outrageous plunge into chaos, and to voice our anger at the cowardice of the murderers themselves and of those who may have ordered the perpetration of these crimes," said a joint statement read to the crowd.

"We stand here together, in silence, to tell them they will not succeed and assure them that, by conducting themselves in this manner, it is their own boomer that they are sowing."

The Red Cross workers - five women and a man - were shot dead as they slept early Tuesday at a recently-opened ICRC compound at Novy Atagi, some 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Chechen capital Grozny.

They were later named as: Dutch builder Hans Elkerbout; Norwegian nurses Ingeborg Foss

and Grunnhild Myklebust; Canadian medical administrator Nancy Malloy; New Zealand nurse Sheryl Taylor; and Spanish nurse Feranda Calado.

Five of them were on secondment from national Red Cross societies.

The agencies at yesterday's march included Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF - Doctors Without Borders), the U.N. Children's Fund, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Health Organization.

Pierre Gauthier, a former ICRC spokesman, said the slayings called into question how the ICRC would operate from now on in such conflict zones.

The rules of battle had changed, he added. Civilians and humanitarian workers had become targets in conflicts and the "anarchy against the ICRC has to be stopped. What to do? This is the question."

The day of mourning had begun with a ceremony at Saint Peter's Cathedral here presided by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga, who repeated a call for governments and nations to mobilize against acts of barbarism.

"This shock leads me to ask everyone to mobilize. We cannot stay paralyzed in front of this horror - which is maybe what the assassins want. It's a combat we

have to lead for humanity."

He pleaded for spiritual, military, political, diplomatic and media leaders to combat atrocities and uphold human values.

The tragedy "is a challenge to us all. There are clear choices to be made and clear messages to be given."

Sommaruga has been calling for the establishment of a permanent tribunal to try crimes against humanity and human rights violations.

"This collapse in ethical values, a multiplication of war crimes, injects urgency into the talks for the creation of an international penal court," he said earlier.

The ICRC, along with other humanitarian organizations, has suspended its operations in Chechnya.

An investigation into the killings has started and Chechen authorities have arrested several suspects.

Chechen Security Minister Abu Movsayev said yesterday that there was strong evidence the slayings were politically motivated, and that further "terrorist acts" could be aimed at destabilizing Chechnya in the runup to presidential and parliamentary elections on January.

Separatist Chechen authorities Thursday offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible.

Hong Kong's Patten, Tung to Meet on Monday



TUNG CHEE-HWA

HONG KONG (AFP) - Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten next Monday will hold his first meeting with his successor, Tung Chee-hwa, since Tung was confirmed in the job, Patten's spokesman said.

The talks will focus on provision of manpower by the government and other needs for helping Tung take office, spokesman Kerry McGlynn said yesterday.

"There's no set, itemized agenda," McGlynn said.

"It's simply a meeting between the two leaders to discuss the co-operation that the Hong Kong government has long promised to the future chief executive to enable him to take over the reins of government on July 1 next year."

The local Radio RTHK reported the pair would also discuss



CHRIS PATTEN

Tung's demand that Patten cooperate with China's plans to set up an appointed assembly, the provisional legislature, which will replace Hong Kong's elected Legislative Council after the return to Chinese rule.

The provisional legislature is widely seen as the biggest potential source of friction between Hong Kong's present and future leaders.

Patten says the assembly is a breach of Sino-British agreements on the future of Hong Kong.

McGlynn said the RTHK report was "speculation."

"It will be somewhat of an exploratory meeting," he said. "What we would want to be doing is maximize the area of constructive cooperation we can work in and minimize those areas where there may be differences."

The Provisional Assembly is due to be set up today in a meeting of a Beijing-appointed Electoral College called the Selection Committee.

It is meeting in the southern Chinese border city of Shenzhen, opposite Hong Kong.

The World at a Glance



KAMPALA, UGANDA - Some 30,000 civilians have fled fighting between the Ugandan army and rebel forces in the Ruwenzori Mountains on the border with Zaire, the state-owned New Vision newspaper reported here yesterday.

TIRASPOL, MOLDOVA - Ethnic Russians in the breakaway Trans-Dniestr region are gearing up for their own presidential elections tomorrow in defiance of the Moldovan authorities.

NEW DELHI, INDIA - Tribal separatist guerrillas shot dead seven policemen and two others yesterday in the Far Eastern Indian state of Tripura, the United News of India (UNI) said.

CONAKRY, SIERRA LEONE - Former Sierra Leone President Joseph Saidu Momoh will return from Guinea next month for the first time since he fled a 1991 coup, Sierra Leone's Head of State Ahmed Tejan Kabbah announced yesterday.

BEIJING, CHINA - State owned industries that can no longer afford to pay their workers are threatening to aggravate China's already fragile social tensions, an official report published yesterday said.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA - Six people disguised as police stole \$12 million early yesterday from a security firm in Buenos Aires, police said.

MOSCOW, RUSSIA - Fire fighters extinguished a blaze on board a Panama-registered oil tanker off the Falkland Islands and all the Latvian crew were safe yesterday, a British navy spokeswoman told AFP.

(DISPATCHES)

Indonesia's Suharto Creates New Tax on Rich

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (Reuters) - President Suharto, in a decree released by the state secretariat yesterday, ordered wealthy Indonesian individuals and companies to donate two percent of their profits to the poor.

In the order dated December 4, Suharto said individuals and companies with net annual earnings of over 100 million rupiah (\$42,000) must make the donations. The order was effective for the current 1996 tax year.

Analyst Christianto Wibisono, director of the Indonesian Business Data Center, said more than 11,000 individuals and companies would be affected.

"This is an additional tax for rich people," he said, adding it was "a political charity."

The decree said: "Individuals and companies have to give two percent of their after-tax profit to poor families in one tax year."

Suharto in September asked Indonesia's wealthy why half of

those in the upper income bracket had ignored a government appeal to donate two percent of their profits to alleviate poverty.

Wibisono said the director-general of Indonesia's Tax Authority, who also holds a senior position in the charitable foundation which receives the money, then wrote to 5,000 taxpayers who had not complied with the request, asking them to forward the money.

While it was not immediately clear how the decree would be enforced, Wibisono said he expected most local taxpayers to comply voluntarily.

"Most local people will comply, only the multi-nationals will argue. People say it is better not to argue with the government as you will be considered opposition. This has become a political issue and you will be considered disloyal," he said.

The 1995 appeal for donations to the government's poverty alle-



SUHARTO

viation program was issued in the form of a presidential decree and addressed to private companies and individuals with an after-tax income of more than 100 million rupiah a year.

Greek President Visits Egypt

ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT (AFP) - Greek President Costis Stephanopoulos began here yesterday a visit to Egypt with a stop in this Mediterranean city to meet members of the Greek community here, airport officials said.

Stephanopoulos was due in Cairo later in the day and is due to hold talks today with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss bilateral relations and issues of common interest.

The northern city of Alexandria was founded according to legend by Alexander the Great and was home to the acclaimed contemporary Greek poet Constantine Cavafy. It is considered Egypt's second capital.

Around 120,000 Greeks live in Egypt at the time of World War II but only 3,000 are left.

FBI Agent Charged with Spying for Moscow

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, U.S.A. (AFP) - An FBI agent was arrested and indicted in a U.S. Federal Court Tuesday on charges he attempted to spy for Moscow from 1987 to 1992.

Earl Pitts, 43, a special supervisory agent with the FBI, was indicted on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage, attempted espionage and the conveyance without authority of public property to the Soviet Union and later to Russia.

A preliminary hearing was set for yesterday. If convicted, Pitts could be jailed for life or executed.

FBI Director Louis Freeh bailed the action, saying, "Today's arrest of Mr. Pitts represents the apprehension and termination of a

significant threat to our national security and to the integrity of the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the Russian intelligence service."

An FBI affidavit said Pitts was an agent for the Soviet Union's KGB and for Russia's Sluzhba Vneshney Rasvedki Rossi (SVRR) which succeeded the security agency.

Pitts received some \$224,000 for his activities between 1987 and 1992, including \$100,000 in a "reserve" account, according to an FBI affidavit. From 1992 to the present, Pitts was a "dormant" agent for the SVRR, it said.

Pitts, an FBI employee since 1983, currently holds "top secret" security clearance and had access to highly sensitive information, the FBI said.



JERICHO, WEST BANK: Abdel Nasser Ismail al-Kaissa (L), Ibrahim Saleh Alkam (C) and Ibrahim Mas'adhane stand in the Palestinian court Dec. 18 in Jericho. The court sentenced Abdel Nasser Ismail Al-Kaissa and Ibrahim Saleh Alkam to a life sentence and Ibrahim Mas'adhane to a 15-year sentence for the killing of Jewish settlers.

(AFP Photo)

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24-0 Win Not Enough to Save Perugia's Coach

PERUGIA, ITALY (AFP) - Giovanni Galeone, the coach of Italian Serie A side Perugia, will be getting the sack for Christmas, even if his team beats Bologna 24-0 on Sunday. Galeone has had a stormy relationship all season with club owner Luciano Gaucci, starting with a farcical row over an appearance by Galeone's dog at a press conference. But Gaucci's son Alessandro, the club's managing director, made no secret of what's in store for Galeone during the winter break. "Even if we win 24-0 at Bologna, there's nothing to be done," he said. "with everything that's happened, he can't stay at this club."

Sports Highlights

Stewart and Hussein Defy Zimbabwe

BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE (AP) - England grafted steadily through a drizzly and breezy morning Friday to reach 128-2 at lunch on the third day of the first cricket test in their efforts to match Zimbabwe's first innings total of 376.

After Nick Knight was out leg before to Henry Olonga for 56, bringing the England score to 92-2, Nasser Hussein was dropped by Alistair Campbell at short square leg on his first ball.

It was a difficult chance, but Hussein survived and England fought back against a mix of spin and pace, taking runs off Olonga and Heath streak while keeping leg spinner Paul Strang at bay all morning.

Alec Stewart was looking secure on 29 but Hussein, although striking two boundaries, has still to settle in.

The day started in damp conditions, with Olonga and streak both getting late movement in the air. Olonga gave away 22 runs from his first three overs, but he got one to move off leg stump and lefthander knight was plumb in front.

England was still 248 behind with eight wickets left and the game remained finely balanced.

The Tourists' batting has been intermittent and sometimes fragile on the Zimbabwe tour so far. England has lost three of six matches on the Zimbabwe tour, including a one-day international on Sunday.

Zimbabwe has achieved only one test victory in 20 attempts - against Pakistan two years ago.



Russia Takes Second Cup Win in Two Days

MOSCOW (AP) - Russia scored three goals in the final 12 minutes to defeat the Czech Republic 3-1 Tuesday and take sole possession of first place in the week-long Izvestia Cup Ice Hockey Tournament.

A young Canadian team, meanwhile, was routed for the second straight day and fell to the bottom of the five-team standings with a 6-1 loss to Finland.

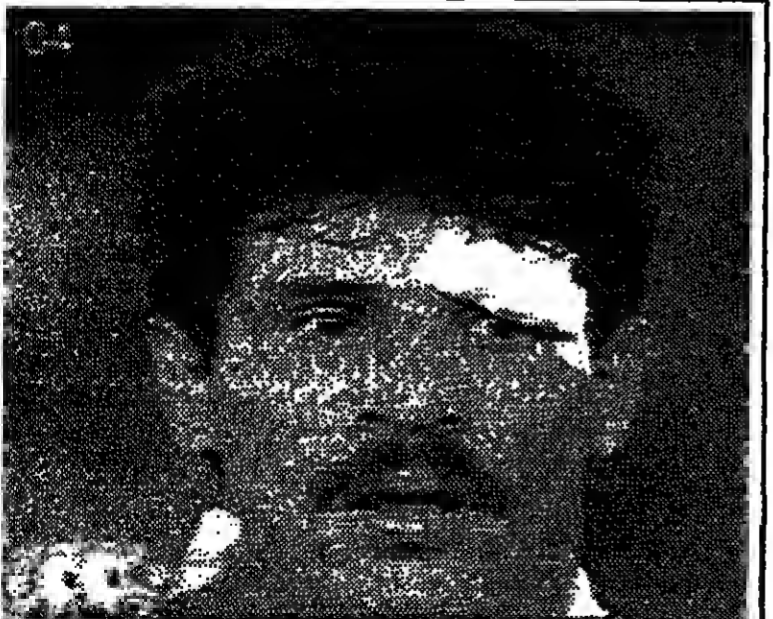
The world champion Czechs were clinging to a 1-0 lead on a second-period goal by David Vyborny when an aggressive Russian attack produced back-to-back goals by Alexander Prokopyev and Alexander Korolyuk midway through the final period.

Korolyuk added an empty-net goal with one second left in the game at the CSKA Ice Palace.

Earlier, Finland rebounded strongly from an opening-day loss to Russia, piling up a 5-0 lead after two periods before slogging through a third period marred by penalties and a fight.

Mika Alatalo scored twice for the winners, who also got goals from Kimmo Rintanen, Pasi Saarela, Juha Riihijarvi and Jarkko Varvio.

Steve Junker scored for Canada.



Pictured above is Ali Daei, one of the best strikers of Iran's national soccer team. Despite his missing a penalty kick in an Asian Cup semifinal match with Saudi Arabia Dec. 18, he is still one of the most valued members of the team.

IRAN NEWS

SPORTS

Real Deal for Roberto

MADRID (AFP) - Spanish League leaders Real Madrid have signed 22-year-old Brazilian international midfielder Ze Roberto from La Portuguesa on a five-year contract, media reports said here Friday. Real President Lorenzo Sanz thrashed out a \$15 million deal with Ze Roberto and his club at a meeting late Thursday in Sao Paulo, Sports Dailies as and Marca reported. Sanz had hoped his new signing would be available to play in a December 29 friendly with Italian outfit Sampdoria, but Ze Roberto explained he was going on his honeymoon that day. The player is now expected to arrive in Spain in the New Year.

VOL. III. No. 633 TEHRAN Price 200 Rials

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ABU DHABI: Iranian Forward Payrovani (R) cut the ball from Saudi Arabia forward Sami Al-Jaber during their Asian Cup semi-final in Abu Dhabi stadium December 18.

(AFP Photo)

Saudis Poised to Return to Summit of Asian Football

ABU DHABI (AFP) - Saudi Arabia are poised to return to the summit of Asian Football when they play United Arab Emirates in the final of the Asian Cup here today.

Four years after losing 1-0 to Japan in the final in Hiroshima, the Saudis, who in the past three finals have won the title twice, are determined to reinforce their superiority in the region.

With joint pre-tournament favorites Japan and South Korea crashing out in humiliating fashion in the quarter-finals, Saudi Arabia have ended up facing the weakest of the four semi-finalists.

But Portuguese coach Eduardo Vingada has a major problem - trying to convince the confident Saudi team to take U.A.E. seriously.

The Saudis, by far the most impressive team here, have failed to cash in on their superiority.

In the semi-final against Iran they were outplayed for most of the match and only managed to scrape through in a penalty shoot-out.

In Youssuf al-Thunayan, Khalid al-Muwallid and Khalid al-Timavi, Vingada has three mid-field players who are capable of turning a match.

But Al-Thunayan, whose genius transformed the Saudi team when he came on against China in the quarter-final after his side were trailing 2-0 failed to deliver in the semi-finals against an impressive Iran and was pulled off in the second half.

The 25-year-old Al-Muwallid, who is one of the classiest players in the tournament, has blown hot and cold and failed to stamp his authority on the team.

Al Timavi has also failed to

show any consistency and Vingada must find a way to lift the 'brains' of his team if the Saudis are to take their third Asian Cup.

Another major problem for Vingada is the fact that his opponents are the U.A.E.

"If we lose against the U.A.E. it is not big deal. We will try to beat them but we will have no problem if they win," said one Saudi official.

Vingada wanted to meet Japan or another East Asian team in the final. Such a match-off would have automatically motivated his players but playing neighboring U.A.E., with no real rivalry between the two countries, there remains a lingering doubt over the Saudi team's commitment.

For the Emirates, the built in desire to win is stronger. Only two weeks ago the country celebrated its silver jubilee and the thought of topping off the celebrations with an Asian Cup win could well decide the outcome.

And the fact that the U.A.E. have never even reached the final before, never mind won the title, gives extra spice to a match that on paper the Saudis should walk.

Rough-house tactics against Kuwait in the semi-final booked U.A.E.'s place in the final.

It also lifted their Yugoslav coach Tomislav Ivic to near cult status.

For over ten years Ivic has barely had time to unpack his case as he crisscrossed the world.

Since 1983 Ivic has never spent more than a year with either clubs or international squads under his command.

His journey to the U.A.E. in-

cluded passing via such top teams as Paris St. Germain, Marseille, Porto, and Benfica. With Porto he lifted the European Super Cup and the Intercontinental Cup.

From the start of the tournament the U.A.E. have struggled to convince but when the final whistle came they had always managed

to do just enough to snatch victory.

The Emirates are looking to Ivic to weave his magic once more before he almost certainly grabs his bags and moves on to another post in another country.

If Ivic can conjure up an against-the-odds U.A.E. victory, the country's birthday celebration will be complete.

Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games Put Back Four Days

SYDNEY (AFP) - The date of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games has been officially changed to begin four days later from October 18 to 29, 2000, the Sydney Paralympic Organizing Committee said here Friday.

Committee Chief Executive Lois Appleby said in a statement that the date change, from October 14-24, was recommended to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) following an intensive evaluation of this year's Atlanta Paralympic Games.

"The transition period between the 1996 Olympic and Paralympic games was totally inadequate and seriously impacted on the running of the Paralympic Games," Appleby said.

Appleby said the tight set-up period was particularly evident in the village where the organizers had only 48 hours to move from one event to another.

She said the Athletes Village would now be open seven days before the Paralympic Games opening ceremony in accordance with IPC regulations.

The change of dates also ensures that more finals will be held

on the second weekend of the Paralympic Games, which in turn will attract a greater number of spectators and enable the closing ceremony to be held on a Sunday, Appleby said.

Kelly Confident on England Bid for 2006 World Cup

LONDON (AFP) - The football Association's Chief Executive Graham Kelly said Friday he was confident England would win their bid to host the 2006 World Cup, despite tough competition.

"We have a very good chance indeed. By any standards 1996 was a wonderful and exciting year. On the back of Euro 96 we announced the World Cup bid," said Kelly.

Speaking on BBC Television, Kelly admitted England faced tough competition, particularly from European champions Germany, but he said he believed last summer's success in hosting Euro 96 would help tip the balance in its favor.

کتابخانه

Today in History

1620 -- Pilgrims go ashore from ship Mayflower at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, to United States.

1747 -- Convention of St. Petersburg between Britain, Holland and Russia is signed.

1832 -- Egyptian forces rout Turkish army at Battle of Konieh.

1851 -- French plebiscite supports new constitution drawn up by Louis Napoleon.

1898 -- Radium is discovered by scientists Pierre and Marie Curie.

1921 -- Russia and Turkey form alliance.

1934 -- Bolivia's President Daniel Salamanca is overthrown in military coup.

1953 -- Iran's former premier Mohammed Mosaddegh is sentenced to three years in prison for trying to lead revolt against shah.

1961 -- Moise Tshombe agrees to end secession of Katanga.

1967 -- Louis Washkosky, first man to undergo heart transplant, dies in Cape Town, South Africa, 18 days after surgery.

1971 -- Kurt Waldheim, Austrian diplomat, is chosen Secretary-General of United Nations.

1989 -- Nicolae Ceausescu declares state of emergency in Timisoara after tens of thousands of protesters fill the streets.

1990 -- Albanian government orders removal of all statues and symbols bearing Josef Stalin's name.

1991 -- Saddam Hussein says Iraq will not pull out of Kuwait.

1992 -- A chartered Dutch jumbo jet with 340 people aboard breaks apart and bursts into flames while trying to land in a storm. Fifty-two travelers and two crew members are killed.

Tips for Conquering Common Cold

By Dr. Allan Bruckheim

QUESTION: Another winter starts, and immediately I come down with yet another cold. You would think by this time I would have developed an immunity to those infections. Why doesn't that happen?

Would you also tell me what I can do to avoid these nasty, annoying bouts of a runny red nose and violent sneezing that shakes the very thoughts right out of my head?

I sure could use some of your help and advice.

ANSWER: If it were but a single virus that caused the common cold, we might all soon develop the immunity necessary to prevent it from recurring. The problem is that more than 200 different viruses exist.

More than half of the viruses are rhinoviruses ("rhino" from

the Greek word meaning "nose") all capable of producing the symptoms that we diagnose as resulting from the common cold. It is highly likely that each new cold you develop comes from an infection with another virus. And despite continuing research, the prevention of these episodes is not likely to be developed for quite some time.

You might want to incorporate a few simple precautions in your life to help you avoid at least some of your infections.

Simply stated, the best way to prevent a cold is to stay away from people that have them - and that includes youngsters, who seem to have colds more frequently than adults. Since the virus is transmitted by touching, avoid touching objects that may have been contaminated by someone with a cold. Washing

your hands carefully with soap and water during the cold season will certainly help.

To avoid transmission of the virus to your system, keep your hands and fingers away from your eyes and nose. Keep physical and emotional stress to a minimum.

It's clear your genes are of no help, for as much as 5 percent of the population never gets a cold, a situation attributed to a greater immunity conferred upon them by their ancestors.

When a cold does strike, in the absence of any true cure the advice is still plenty of liquids, rest, and the use of antihistamines and decongestants to control the symptoms, and ibuprofen, acetaminophen or aspirin (for adults) to control the aches.

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DENNIS THE MENACE

by Hank Ketcher



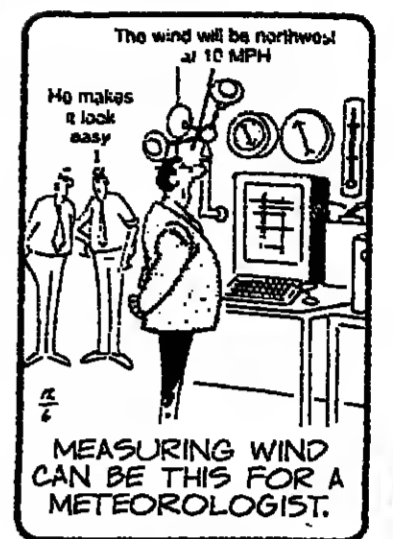
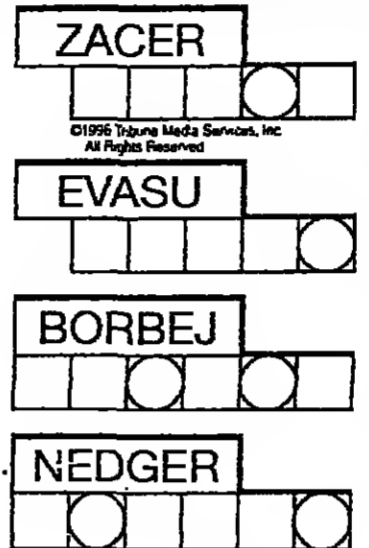
ON THE OTHER HAND, MAYBE THE BLENDER DID COME WITH A LID.

CORNUCOPIA

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: IDIOT AFIRE FALTER BEAVER
Answer: How he felt after his first day on bucking broncos - BETTER OFF

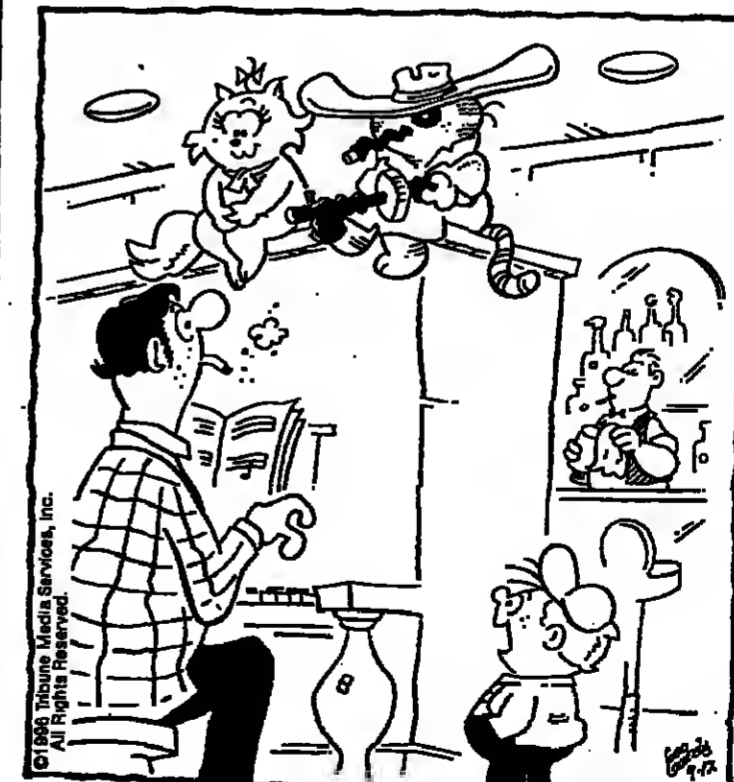
OPHRYS FUSCA Link

Family: Orchidaceae

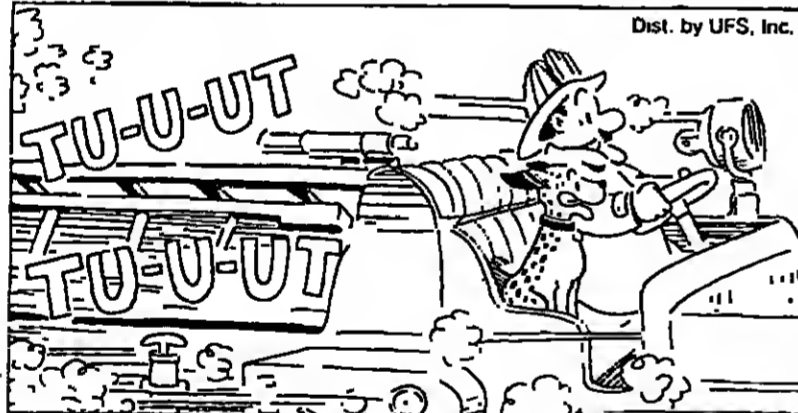


The genus *Ophrys* has the same general features as those of *Orchis*, their difference lying in the absence of a flower-spur. The species illustrated displays great variety. Its main characteristic is the elongated, almost black velvet lip. It grows at low altitudes or in the semi-mountain zone. Flowers February-May. Almost everywhere in Greece.

HEATHCLIFF



"CAN YOU PLAY 'KITTEN ON THE KEYS'?"



IRAN

NEWS

Fake "Sheiks" Spark an Egyptian Treasure Hunt

ASYUT, EGYPT (AFP) - Residents of this southern Egyptian province are digging under their homes in a feverish hunt for gold and ancient relics, helped by fake "magicians" who traffic in antiquities.

"An ancient town buried under western Asyut contains treasures from the Pharaonic, Coptic, Islamic and Greco-Roman times," a local antiquities official told AFP.

A cattle merchant was arrested last month on charges of trying to sell columns from a 5th century church from the early Coptic Christian era, the ruins of which he found under his house in Asyut, 385 kilometers (240 miles) south of Cairo.

Helped by six people, the merchant, Sabri al-Gezeiri, toiled for several weeks and dug a 25-meter

(yard) tunnel leading to the ancient church.

"A (Muslim) sheik told me he had magic powers like a genie capable of helping me find gold which belonged to my ancestors," the merchant told police.

But he refused to reveal the identity of the sheik, fearing that the cleric would "order the genie to punish me," he told police. "I am not the only one to search for treasures under my house with the help of the sheiks. Everyone here has been doing it secretly for years," the merchant said.

One retired sheik told police that his "colleagues" were actually traffickers in antiquities who know that the western Asyut region is a treasure trove.

The cleric said he gave up his "archaeological activities" a few

years ago after going blind.

"In exchange for the help they provide to track down the treasures, the fake sheiks get half of the objects found by the homeowners after swearing them to secrecy," the retired cleric said. "The fake sheiks warn the homeowners that the genies will be angry and punish them if they break their promises," he added.

In an effort to convince them of the strength of their supernatural powers, the sheiks conduct rituals during the digs.

They burn incense and coal, read sacred messages inscribed in so-called ancient talismans and pretend to speak directly to the genies, he said.

"Thanks to this method large quantities of ancient objects,

namely coins, have been found in recent years," the cleric said, adding that all had been found buried under homes and streets.

A local police official said it was difficult to catch traffickers because the digs take place in private locations and the inhabitants refuse to identify the clerics involved.

However, authorities have however arrested a dozen young people implicated in the digs and recently they detained a 50-year-old vet, Wagdi Abdel Sayed Shafik.

The police found at Shafik's home a collection of ancient Islamic objects and bags containing samples of earth taken from underneath houses in the Asyut region which he said he analyzed for "treasure trove contents."

U.S. Space Experts Focus on Origins of Universe

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A cosmic discussion about possible extraterrestrial life on earlier prompted experts in space policy, science and religion to restate the need to pursue the very origins of the universe.

Fueled by recent discoveries of possible microscopic biological fossils from Mars and reports of ice on the moon, the group of experts, including NASA Chief Dan Goldin, pondered such eternal questions as whether earthlings are the only life-form of the universe and how the universe began.

Meeting with Vice President Al Gore, they concluded that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is on the right

track in its pursuit of evidence of life on other planets.

"This confirms that we're going the right direction and asking the right questions," Goldin told reporters after the two-hour discussion.

"We will be driven by answering fundamental scientific questions," Goldin said and added that given the interest and advances in planetary exploration and the search for life's origins, "our astrobiology program is woefully underfunded. President Bill Clinton's science and technology adviser, Dr. John Gibbons, said the discussion would give flavor to a White House space summit expected to be held in February.

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It was sent aloft in 1972, when Richard Nixon was in the White House, Bobby Fischer was the world's chess champion, and the IBM 360 mainframe still dominated the computer industry. It was designed to have a useful life of three years, at most. Yet today, after a quarter-century, when Fischer has disappeared from the chess scene and the IBM 360 is merely a nostalgia item on display at Boston's Computer Museum, the doughty little spacecraft Pioneer 10 is still plugging along.

As of this week, Pioneer is 9.66 billion km from Earth, making it the most distant man-made object in the universe. Its signals—barely discernible against the cacophony of background space noise—continue to register on the giant radio telescopes of National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Deep Space Network, reassuring scientists that Pioneer is still alive and calling home. Perhaps most remarkable, those signals emanate from an 8-watt transmitter, which radiates about as much power as a bedroom night light, and take more than nine hours to reach Earth.

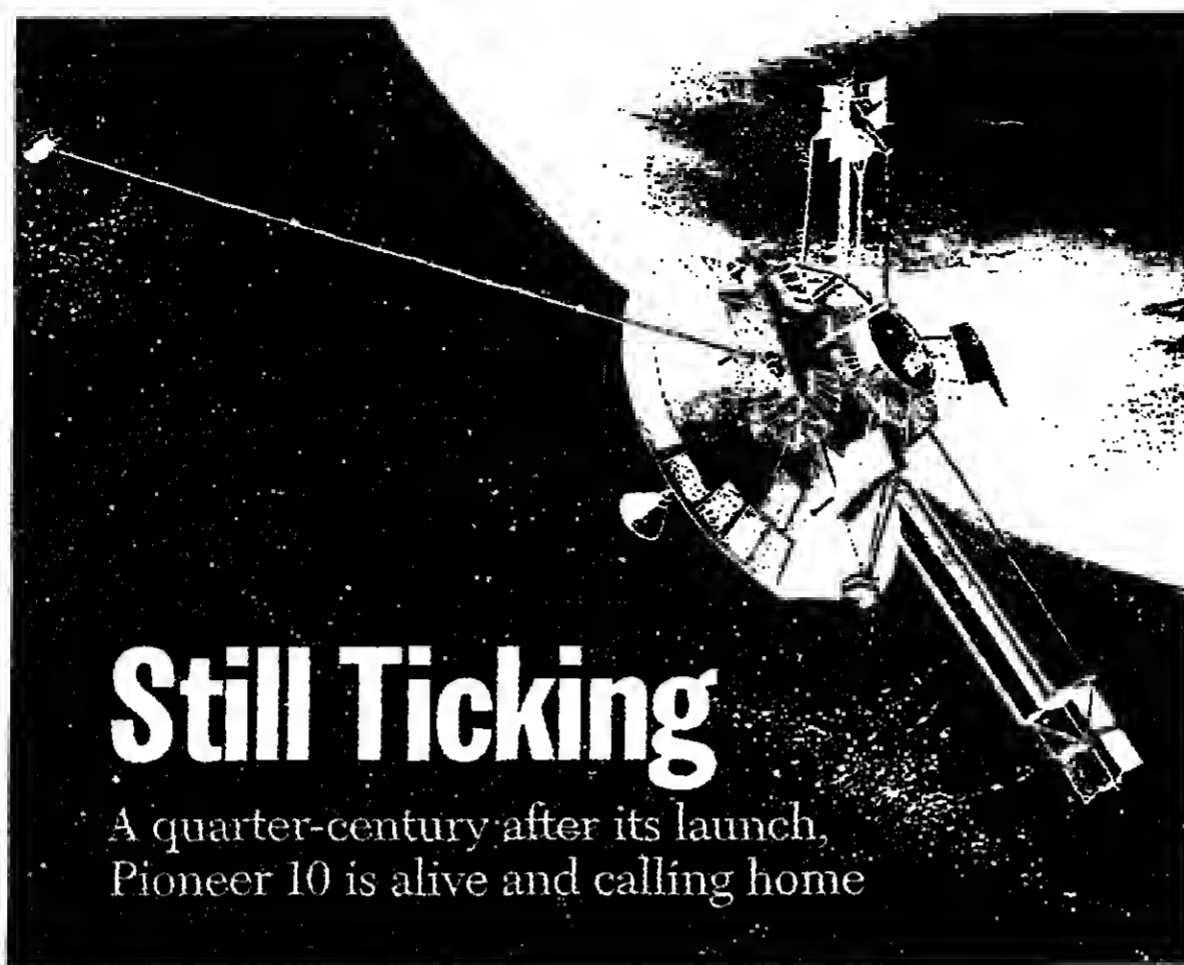
Cruising through the cosmos at 44,579 km/h, the long-lasting NASA spacecraft is measuring cosmic rays and solar emissions, probing for the outer boundary of the solar system and even abetting the efforts of scientists pursuing SETI, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. When Pioneer was launched in March 1972, its primary assignment, ordained by NASA, was to reach the environment of Jupiter. At the time, says physicist James Van Allen, the discoverer of Earth's radiation belt and a principal contributor to Pioneer's achievements, "this objective was regarded as a bold one." While unmanned U.S. and Soviet spacecraft had visited the inner planets, none had flown beyond Mars and braved the asteroid belt to reach Jupiter and the other outer planets. Indeed, many scientists feared that, in addition to the asteroids, the belt was laden with unseen particles that would collide with and destroy an intruding craft. But Pioneer 10 sailed through with nary a scratch.

As it swung by Jupiter in November 1973, Pioneer took the first close-up photographs of the giant planet and its moons, detected and mapped its immense magnetic field and intense radiation belts, analyzed its turbulent atmosphere and discovered that it was encircled by a faint Saturn-like ring.

Then, assisted by a powerful boost from Jovian gravity, the spacecraft hurtled toward deep space. Not far beyond Jupiter, scientists had expected Pioneer to find the boundary of the heliosphere, beyond which the solar wind (charged particles emitted from the sun) can no longer be detected. Yet as distant as Pioneer is today, it is still being wafted by solar breezes, and scientists now believe the elusive boundary could lie as far as 16.09 billion km from the sun, and perhaps farther.

Pioneer will eventually cross that boundary but will be unable to convey the news to Earth. Unlike spacecraft operating closer to the sun, it cannot rely on solar panels to generate power. Instead it is equipped with a thermocouple-like generator heated by radiation from a clump of plutonium 238. Unfortunately, the radiation is also slowly degrading the generator, which is producing only two-thirds of its original output.

Last week in the Pioneer control room at NASA's Ames Re-



Still Ticking

A quarter-century after its launch, Pioneer 10 is alive and calling home

search Center, in Mountain View, California, project manager Fred Wirth watched Pioneer's data, in the form of multicolored blocks of numbers flashing across a computer screen. To make the best use of the spacecraft's dwindling power, he has shut down all but three of its 11 scientific instruments, and by early next year only one—Van Allen's cosmic ray detector—will be able to function. Citing operational costs and the diminishing scientific return, NASA has ordered Wirth to halt all communications with Pioneer next year on March 31.

That is melancholy news not only for Wirth and other members of the Pioneer team but also for astronomer Frank Drake and his crew at the nearby Mountain View headquarters of SETI. There, scientists hoping to pick up radio signals from a distant civilization have been using Pioneer's signals to test the efficacy of their detection systems, says Drake: "It's been our prim diagnostic tool."

Yet even a silent Pioneer 10 may someday effect a kind of communication with extraterrestrials. Attached to one of the spacecraft's antenna support struts is a plaque, designed by Drake and astronomer Carl Sagan, that is inscribed with symbols, binary numbers and drawings conveying what they hope is a universally understandable message. It locates the solar system, shows that Pioneer was launched from Earth and portrays a terrestrial man and woman.

If the plaque is one day recovered by advanced extraterrestrials, however, we won't be around to receive their reply. At Pioneer's current cruising speed, even if the spacecraft were headed directly toward the closest star, Proxima Cen-

tauri, and any possible nearby residents, it would not arrive for

some 100,000 years. ■

Courtesy of Time Magazine

Homo Erectus, Homo Sapiens May Have Coexisted in Asia

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Homo erectus, the predecessor of modern man, may have survived longer than previously thought and actually shared the same area in Asia as Homo sapiens, according to a report published in Science magazine.

A team of international researchers have redated two fossil sites in Java where Homo erectus bones were found in the 1930s, concluding that the smaller-brained, thicker-boned humanoid was alive as recently as 27,000 years ago, when Homo sapiens also roamed the region.

Anthropologists believe Homo erectus first appeared in Africa some 1.8 million years ago and spread throughout Asia and Europe until it vanished some 200,000 years ago.

The team of U.S., Canadian and Indonesian scientists led by Carl Swisher of Berkeley Geochronology Center, in California, used argon-based radioactive dating and electron spin resonance techniques on samples of animal teeth taken from a geological layer where the human-like fossils were unearthed.

Both systems produced an age range of 53,000 to 27,000 years, the lower of which overlaps by some 20,000 years the period when Homo sapiens inhabited Java and other parts of Southeast Asia.

The scientists said they are very confident of their results, but that they plan to return to the site to find remains containing carbon that can be dated by the radiocarbon method, which is more accurate for material no older than 50,000 years.

If their conclusions are confirmed, they would lend support to the "Out of Africa" hypothesis for the evolution of Homo sapiens, which holds that our ancestors came out of Africa some 250,000 years ago and gradually spread throughout the world, coexisting in some areas with other humanoids.

The multiregional theory holds that Homo sapiens developed from Homo erectus, which would make their coexistence highly un-

likely.

If the dates are right, it would mean that three humanoid species roamed the earth at the same time: Homo sapiens, Homo erectus and Neanderthal, which inhabited Europe.

Arctic Tundra Is Leaking More Carbon

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Carbon gases that contribute to global warming are leaking out of the Arctic tundra and into the Earth's atmosphere more than ever before, scientists said recently.

"The Arctic has probably made a switch," said George Kling, University of Michigan assistant professor of biology. "The tundra is putting more carbon into the atmosphere than it is sucking up."

Kling said the increase in carbon gases leaving the tundra could exacerbate global warming because, as global temperatures increase, more of the carbon now frozen in the tundra will leak into the atmosphere.

The amount of carbon stored in Arctic tundra equals almost one-third of the total amount of carbon in the earth's atmosphere. Carbon gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, contribute to global warming, scientists say. Kling is one of several scientists working on the gas flux study, part of the National Science Foundation's arctic system science program. They presented their findings at the American Geophysical Union's conference in San Francisco. Kling's research team has been studying how carbon dioxide and methane move between land, water and the atmosphere in the Kuparuk River basin, part of Alaska's north slope extending from the Brooks range to the Arctic Ocean.

Their experiments on the north slope showed that carbon molecules are now moving out of the

Fighting Pollution With Public Opinion

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Countries seeking to fight pollution may model their efforts on Indonesia's successful method of threatening to publicly denounce corporate polluters, the World Bank reported earlier.

Known as proper -- program for pollution control, evaluation and rating -- the campaign began in June 1995, on the initiative of Nabiel Makarim, director of Indonesia's Pollution Control Agency.

Initially focusing on water pollution the agency -- with the bank's help -- established a list of polluters and devised a computerized model that took into account the dangers presented by each substance.

According to the model's results, 187 companies were ranked in five categories: gold for an excellent score, green for a very good score, blue for a decent score, red for violations and black for the worst offenders.

The agency then published its findings, giving only the names of the five green companies, while threatening to reveal the names of the 115 red and six black companies if they were still in violation of environmental statutes.

The media spread the news: articles appeared in the largest newspapers and in many magazines.

The agency received a flood of phone calls from companies that had never before heeded its efforts, asking how they could better their

scores before the agency's deadline.

By December, the bank reports, the number of "blue" companies had increased 13 percent, while "red" shed six percent. Of the six black companies, only three were still in the "worst polluter" category.

None has yet reached a gold rating, and the "greens" fell from five to four companies.

The Indonesian government plans to keep the pressure on by publishing reports on specific sectors of the economy at regular intervals, and wants to extend the list of pollutants to those in the air and to hazardous waste.

Mexico -- whose capital is among the most polluted cities in the world -- has asked the bank for advice on how to implement a similar program.

Another will be launched in the Philippines, where heavy metals and industrial pollutants contaminate a large lake next to Manila.

Such a program, the bank says, has special appeal for "poor countries where enforcement is weak and companies often violate pollution regulations with impunity."

In industrialized countries "where ... most companies already comply with regulatory standards" a program like this "would encourage them to invest in additional pollution reduction," according to the bank.

New Fertilization Technique Detailed

CHICAGO (Reuters) - A new test tube fertilization technique in which the sperm is injected directly into the egg appears to be safe and allows the use of sperm from men who would otherwise be considered infertile, researchers said recently.

The technique, called intracytoplasmic sperm injection, is considered a breakthrough in assisted reproduction technology, according to the report from New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, published in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association.

The procedure results in a higher fertility success rate than with standard techniques in which the egg is removed from a woman's body and fertilized in a laboratory when exposed to sperm, but the injection method is also

more invasive. The report said that in the largest series of such fertilizations done so far in the United States there was no difference in miscarriages or pregnancy terminations between the new technique and the older one.

"Recent evidence demonstrates that the evolution of pregnancies and the occurrence of congenital malformation following treatment by (the new technique) are similar to the outcomes with other assisted reproduction procedures," the study said.

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Educational and Occupational Activities of Hamedan Province's War Disabled

Islamic Revolution's glorious history is filled with the legendary and free men and women who left their material world and transcended to the Supreme Friend's presence and on their path and policy joined the Friend and became the living and speaking evidence to the pride of Islam.

The late Imam once said, "we are unable to picture their place with the Almighty, those who fought to defend their country."

Our Great Leader has also said, "we should all do our best to respond to their sacrifices."

In this interview, our correspondent has talked to Mr. Hamid Darvishi, Director General of Hamedan Province's Islamic Revolution's Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation on the cultural, educational and occupational activities of his office during the past 7 years.

"Obeying the Leaders' orders, we have vast programs to provide various services to the war-disabled," Mr. Darvishi said.

"We are proud to be offering our service to 2 thousand and 704 individuals who have become over 25 percent disabled by the war," he added.

"One of our most important tasks is to provide education and occupations for our heroes and their families," Mr. Darvishi said.

"Within the past 7 years, we have arranged educational courses in all levels for them," he added.

"We have been able to hold clinical courses for our heroes who are over 70 percent disabled in three different groups, distributed educational pamphlets and publications, offering braille, operatorship and direction finding courses to the blind in cooperation with the Welfare Organization. Our heroes have also been offered assistances with their transportation," he said.

"522 million and 130 thousand rials have so far been spent on the war-disabled in Hamedan Province," Mr. Darvishi added.

"Currently one thousand and 541 children and 112 wives of over 25 percent of the war disabled are being educated," he said.

"Through the efforts made by the Janbazan Foundation, children of 210 of the 25 to 49 percent, 144 of the 50 to 69 percent and 117 of the 70 percent war-disabled individuals are studying

at Hamedan Province's Shahed schools," he added.

"Provincial authorities and leaders are paying special attentions to our beloved heroes," Mr. Darvishi stressed.

"A total of 4 thousand and 297 of our war-disabled are currently employed in the province," he added.

"Procuring industrial machinery such as lathes for our loved ones is among our activities," he said while saying 485 million rials of interest-free loans have been paid to them.

"We have provided our war-disabled with 3 billion and 390 million rials from the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 62nd notes of the budget law," Mr. Darvishi added.

"Through the efforts made by the Foundation 200 of them have been officially employed by the Education Ministry," he said.

"Our other activities include obtaining 399 business permits, 183 principal permits, 10 farmlands, 95 cases of tools and instruments, 236

Mr. Darvishi said: "1723 of our loved ones disabled above 25 percent out of a total of 2703 have been provided with housing along with another 250 during the War-Disabled Week," concluded the Director General of Hamedan Province's Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation.

"To solve the problems facing the war-disabled we have implemented the National Plan for the Participation and Support of the War-Disabled in our province headed by the Deputy Provincial Governor for Office Administration and Financial Affairs by holding 600 meetings," The Director General said.

"The Provincial Gubernatorial Office has also helped by having 30 of our dear 70 percent war-disabled em-

and the 25 percent disabled by chemical warfare will be given special attention," he added.

"We are implementing a plan for finding jobs for the 'absolute jobless' by organizing technical and vocational courses for and paying monthly allowances to them," Mr. Darvishi said.

"Our beloved war-disabled have been facilitated with 4 billion 345 million rials for their employment so far," he said.

"The foundation is also active in



Mr. Hamid Darvishi, Director General of Hamedan Province's Islamic Revolution's Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation.

Our beloved war-disabled have been facilitated with 4 billion 345 million rials for their employment so far.

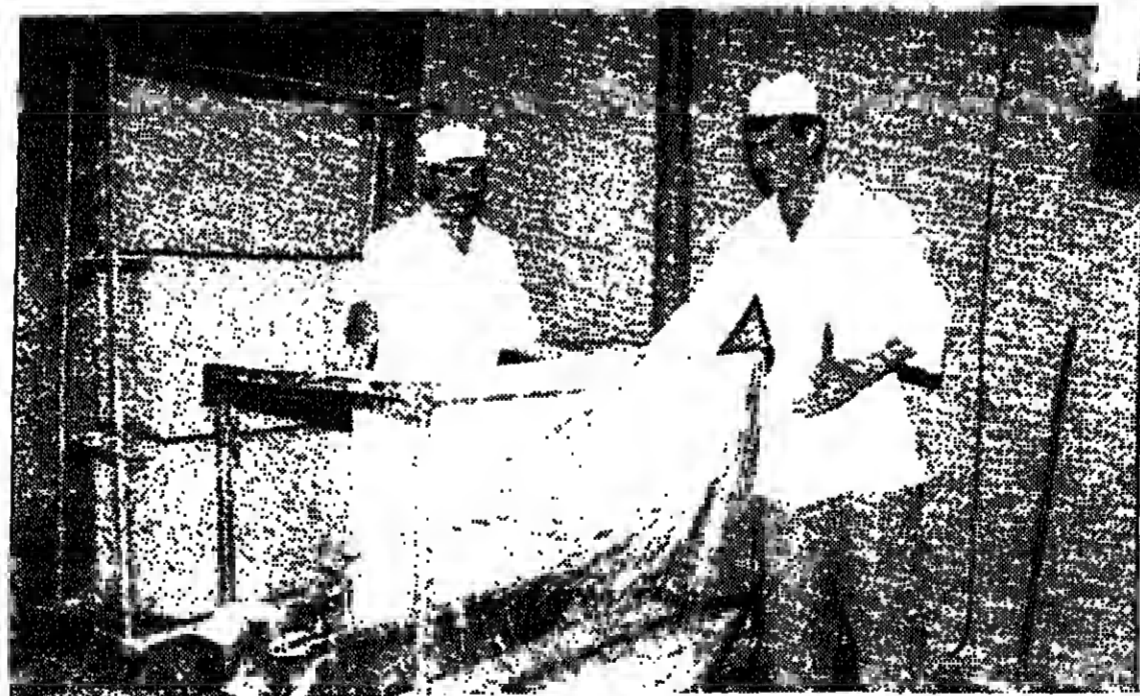
have been done and procuring 13 thousand and 273 prescription drugs needed by those suffering from spinal cord injuries should also be included in our activities," he added.

"Shahid Madani Dental Clinic has been providing dental care to our beloved heroes for the past 7 years along with a variety of other services," he said.

"Plannings for monthly check-ups for those with chemical, neurological and spinal cord injuries, prosthesis services at the war-disabled's residences once every six months and constructing more medical facilities are all among this year's plans at the health and medical treatment division of our foundation," Mr. Darvishi said.

"1723 of our loved ones disabled above 25 percent out of a total of 2703 have been provided with housing along with another 250 during the War-Disabled Week," concluded the Director General of Hamedan Province's Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation.

"Neurologically speaking, 1750 cases have been visited by the doctors. 100 thousand 560 cases have been hospitalized in Hamedan Province, 973 consultations and psychotherapies



2 war-disabled, active in production yesterday in the frontlines of the "Sacred Defense" today in the scene of construction.

sets of industrial and agricultural machinery, 68 ownerships for taxis, 12 taxi drivers' assistant cards, 112 chicken farm permits and 34 introductory letters for obtaining business units for them," he added.

ployed at various bureaux," he said. "Among our loved ones those who are unemployed and considered 70 percent disabled and are above 55 years of age along with the psychiatrically and psychologically acutely unfa-

cultural and social affairs, believing in their positive and valuable roles," he added.

"516 Quran and Islamic theosophy courses, 63 nights with Quran gatherings, 70 Quran memorization and

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IRAN NEWS

'Through the Olive Trees' on Public Screens in London

IRAN NEWS ART DESK

Iran's 1994 Cannes Film Festival entry, "Through the Olive Trees," is to be released rather belatedly in Britain next week, an IRNA report from London said.

The film, the third of a trilogy by the internationally acclaimed Iranian director, Abbas Kiarostami, opens at the Renoir and Metro in London on December 27. It will then be exhibited at selected cinemas around the country.

Earlier this year the first two parts of the trilogy - "Where Is the Friend's Home?" and "Life Goes On" - were screened at ICA in London.

The release of "Through the Olive Trees" coincides with the current exhibition of Mohsen Makhmalbaf's "Gabbeh" in London.

The series of Iranian film releases follows the success of "The White Balloon" which made a breakthrough at the British box office at the beginning of 1996.

Kiarostami is widely regarded as a director of international stature. He wrote the screenplay for "The White Balloon" which was directed by Jafar Panahi, Kiarostami's assistant on "Through the Olive Trees".

Graham Greene's screenplay for the movie "The Third Man" starring Orson Welles that Greene wrote based on his own novel of the same name was among literary treasures sold Monday (Dec.16).

Bought by an anonymous British bidder for 5,405 pounds (\$8,970) at the sale in London by Sotheby's auctioneers, the script has a handwritten note by Greene that reads: "Lines (the only ones) contributed by Orson Welles marked on 10/9" - the text reference.

Welles played the crook Harry Lime in the 1949 movie set in bombed out Vienna immediately after World War II. He claimed he wrote all his own lines in the film, one of the classics of cinema.

But Sotheby's in a background statement said Greene's humorous note referring to a short, pivotal passage which Welles contributed makes it clear the rest of the screenplay was by the British writer, not the American actor.

Greene, one of this century's most famous writers, died in 1991. Welles, one of cinema's greatest actor-directors, died in 1985.

The collection of manuscripts, letters and books, which formed part of Greene's personal library, raised a total of 255,219 pounds (\$423,663). The collection was sold by New York property dealer Clinton Smullyan.

Greene's printer's proof copy of his novel "The End of the Affair" published in 1951, which established the writer as a literary figure of international standing, was bought for 20,700 pounds (\$34,360) by an American book trade buyer.

Rome Remembers Marcello Mastroianni at Trevi Fountain

ROME (AP) - The lights dimmed just after sunset. Water stopped flowing from the white marble Neptune statue in the Trevi Fountain. A lone musician played a melancholy tune on a wooden flute.

Rome began to say farewell to Marcello Mastroianni. The memorial ceremony for the Italian actor took place Thursday at the site of one of his most famous film scenes - the fountain where a Anita Ekberg lured him into the cool waters in the 1960 film "La Dolce Vita."

Rome's mayor, Francesco Rutelli, and Mastroianni's widow Flora watched teary-eyed as two black drapes were unfurled over the side of the white fountain.

A crowd of 500 listened silently while a musician played the score of "8 1/2," a celebrated 1963 film starring Mastroianni.

"This fountain has its historic value, but for the whole world it represents the most famous scene of Italian cinema. This ceremony is our gesture of affection and gratitude to Mastroianni," Rutelli said.

Flora Mastroianni, who was estranged from the actor for years, stood motionless and stared into the still waters in the fountain's basin.

Since his screen debut in 1947, Mastroianni starred in more than 120 films, won two best actor awards at Cannes and was nominated for three Oscars. Mastroianni costarred with Sophia Loren in a number of the Italian comedies.

Giuseppina Cergue, 50, paused to admire Trevi Fountain as she left the ceremony.

"A part of my generation, a little piece of Italy has left us," Cergue said.

Mastroianni died aged 73 at his home in the Rue de Seine on Paris's left bank.

French and Italian fans gathered outside the building to honor his memory and see his companion, French actress Catherine Deneuve and their daughter, actress Chiara Mastroianni, as they emerged.

The two women and French actor Michel Piccoli were at Mastroianni's side when he died, French radio said.

"He was perhaps the greatest European cinema actor of the last 50 years," producer Daniel Toscan du Plantier said.

"He reminds us of Fellini and of all the great things that made post-war Italian cinema, which is also dead," Toscan du Plantier told Ici Television.

Mastroianni, a familiar figure in the streets and restaurants of the left bank, had been treated for cancer of the pancreas but continued to make films until his final months, French media said.

Ironically, understated, always modest, Mastroianni insisted he was uncomfortable with his screen image.

He told interviewers that director Federico Fellini hired him for "La Dolce Vita" because he had a "terribly ordinary face."



'La Dolce Vita'

Mastroianni's Major Films

"I Miserabili" (Les Misérables), 1947
 "Le Ragazze di Piazza di Spagna" (Three Girls from Rome), 1952
 "Tempi Nostri" (Anatomy of Love), 1954
 "La Bella Magaia" (The Miller's Beautiful Wife), 1955
 "Il Gigante" (The Gigant), 1956
 "Le Notti Bianche" (White Nights), 1957
 "Racconti D'Estate" (Love on the Riviera), 1958
 "La Dolce Vita", 1960
 "Addio e la Compagnie" (Leave a Little Love), 1960
 "Divorzio all'Italiana" (Divorce Italian Style), 1961
 "La Vie Privée" (A Very Private Affair), 1962
 "S. I. 2.", 1963
 "Ieri, Oggi e Domani" (Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow), 1963
 "Matrimonio all'Italiana" (Marriage Italian Style), 1964
 "Dramma Della Gelosia" (The Pious Triangle), 1970
 "I Ginepro" (Sunflower), 1969
 "La Moglie del Prete" (The Priest's Wife), 1971
 "C'eravamo Tanto Amati" (We All Loved Each Other So Much), 1975
 "Una Giornata Speciale" (A Special Day), 1977
 "La Città delle Donne" (City of Women), 1980
 "Ginger e Fred", 1986
 "E la Nave Va" (And the Ship Sails On), 1983
 "L'Intervista" (The Interview), 1987
 "Oci Ciornie" (Black Eyes), 1987
 "Used People", 1991
 "Un, Deux, Trois Soleil", 1993
 "Prêt à Porter" (Ready to Wear), 1994
 "Tre Vite Solo una Morte" (Three Lives and Only One Death), 1996

Chirac Opens Mitterrand's National Library

PARIS (AFP) - President Jacques Chirac on Tuesday was set to open France's new National Library, the most controversial of the late socialist Francois Mitterrand's public monuments, and the most costly at eight billion francs (1.6 billion dollars).

Criticized for its immensity, the library with its four 20-story I-shaped towers - 80 meters (264 feet) high and designed to look like open books - will have cost eight billion francs (1.6 billion dollars) by the time it is completed in mid-1998.

Already nicknamed the TGB or "Tres Grande Bibliotheque" (Very Big Library), it will also cost a billion francs a year to run and need a staff of 250 people.

Named after Mitterrand, the onetime socialist party leader and former president who died last January, it opened to the public from Friday.

With the present library building in a 17th century palace in the heart of Paris reaching bursting point, Mitterrand launched the project for a vast new library in 1988.

choosing a rundown industrial site on the left bank in the eastern Tolbiac district of Paris, on the banks of the River Seine.

It is to house 10 million volumes from the old library, which will continue to store precious collections, manuscripts, prints, photographs, maps, sheet music, currency and medals.

But an extra year will be needed to install the computer network with its 3,000 work stations, a catalogue of seven million book

references and 30 million pages of memorized documents.

From the disputed glass pyramid at the Louvre to the reviled bulk of the new opera house at the Bastille, whose facade stones are already falling off, none of Mitterrand's Parisian building projects has aroused as much argument abroad as well as at home as the library designed by young architect Dominique Perrault.

"French Folly" was one of the milder epithets for his concept of the four book-like towers at angles

on a 7.5 hectares (18.5 acres) plot around a vast garden full of trees, like a verdant cloister.

Almost 400 prominent French and foreign personalities signed a petition protesting that the architecture was "spectacularly bad".

Aghast librarians warned the precious books would be imperilled by being stocked in the glass towers, even though they are air-conditioned.

The reading rooms are spacious, almost luxurious. Set above the garden, they have a capacity of 1,697 seats and will eventually offer 300,000 books free of charge.

For a daily fee of 20 francs (four dollars), readers will be able to consult a reference library covering literature, art, philosophy, history, law, economics, politics and science.

The research library, flush with the garden, has 2,100 seats and will house 10 million works being transferred from the old Bibliothèque Nationale.

With its 400 kilometers (248 miles) of shelving, the high-tech new edifice is a far cry from the rooms at the Louvre that King Charles V set aside in 1368 to house the 973 manuscripts of the royal library.

PARIS, FRANCE: From L to R, French President Jacques Chirac, followed by Culture Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, National Library's President Jean Favier and Daniele Mitterrand, widow of late President Francois Mitterrand, visit France's new National Library during the inauguration here Dec. 17. With its 400 km (250 miles) of shelving, the high-tech new edifice has a capacity of 1,697 seats and will eventually offer 300,000 books free of charge.

(AFP Photo)

Business Booms for Chopra

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - The first observation Deepak Chopra had on Singapore was that it lacked "carefreeness and playfulness".

He then went on to calmly argue against hard work and competitive drive as key ingredients for success to an audience brought up in a culture based on such values.

In Singapore for a one-day seminar in November, the best-selling author of books that link health and success with spirituality had other thought-provoking responses for skeptics, fans and the plain curious.

"Hard work, discipline and ambition lead to heart attacks and to hypertension and to drug addiction and to divorce. There is a more creative, more nourishing, more easy, carefree way of doing things," insisted Chopra.

Chopra has written 18 books and sold at least 10 million copies translated into 25 languages - with esoteric titles like Quantum Healing, Ageless Body, Timeless Mind and the Way of the Wizard. Time magazine called him emperor of the soul.

Chopra - seen by some as a quack, by others as a messenger of hope - has grabbed the attention of millions worldwide through his books, seminars, and television shows as well as through news reports that have sniggered at his connection to Hollywood's rich and famous, among them actress Demi Moore.

"Hollywood is less than 0.1 percent of the people I see," was his reply to a question on his credibility.

However, admitting that the "guru to the stars" tag had distorted public perceptions of his work, he told reporters he had asked his celebrity friends to resign from the board of advisors of his center for well being in La Jolla, California.

In person, Chopra has a presence one would expect from a man who commands a worldwide following. His penetrating eyes are hard to avoid even in a roomful of people. One-on-one, he exudes the concern of a close friend, leaning towards you in rapt attention.

"I consider myself an explorer. I raise more questions than I answer," Chopra said.

Believing that intuition, creativity and vision are important ingredients for success, he said his job was to study people who had demonstrated these little-understood qualities - like Pablo Picasso and Albert Einstein.

"If I can learn what these people know, then maybe I can do the same things."

Chopra's spiritual search led him from being a successful endocrinologist and chief of staff at New England Memorial Hospital back to his Indian roots in the 1980s. He studied transcendental meditation (TM) and the ancient Indian Ayurvedic method of healing from TM founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Convinced he could open the minds of doctors more effectively to the applicability of holistic healing methods by addressing large medical conferences, he quit his hospital post.

Today he has extended his quest for the secrets ingredients of

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IRAN POLITICAL NEWS

REPORT:

Yeltsin's Daughter May Soon Join Officialdom

MOSCOW, RUSSIA (AP) - Boris Yeltsin's politically assertive younger daughter may soon join the president's team as a top aide in a move certain to anger the opposition, a newspaper said Tuesday.

Tatyana Dyachenko, 37, already played an active role as an organizer of her father's re-election campaign earlier this year, and has significant behind-the-scenes influence.

Yeltsin had heart bypass surgery in November and has been sidelined for months. In his absence, his political opponents, including his influential former bodyguard, Alexander Korzhakov, accused Yeltsin's daughter of manipulating the president, along with Yeltsin's chief of staff, Anatoly Chubais.

The Russia press has generally responded coolly to Dyachenko's role in the Kremlin, and some newspapers have been openly hostile, suggesting her relationship with Chubais was more than professional.

The Liberal daily Segodnya said it was such attacks that pushed Dyachenko to seek official status so she could "react not simply as a daughter but as a state official."

The newspaper quoted unidentified sources as saying Dyachenko might be appointed a presidential aide before year's end.

Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhemsky tried to play down the report Tuesday without flatly denying it.

"Until today, the president's office has had no documents to confirm the somewhat premature media publications," Yastrzhemsky told reporters, referring to Segodnya's article. He wouldn't elaborate.

Segodnya said Dyachenko's possible appointment is unlikely to add to the clout she already enjoys with her father.

"The president's daughter is indeed solving or helping to solve, as a kind of ideal lobbyist, a large number of issues, especially those which require personal access to Boris Yeltsin," Segodnya's political editor Tatyana Malkina wrote in a front-page article.

"Mrs. Dyachenko also has significantly influenced the level of openness of her father's and family's activities," she said.

According to many reports, it was Dyachenko who helped turn around Yeltsin's initially sluggish re-election bid. She also reportedly helped secure the pro-Yeltsin stance of practically all the Russian press, and purged the president's inner circle of powerful hard-liners, including Korzhakov.

Yeltsin has been largely secluded at hospitals and rest homes since he suffered renewed heart trouble just before his re-election July 3. He has seen few visitors besides family members.

Last week he moved to his hunting lodge northwest of Moscow to finish recuperating from the Nov. 5 quintuple-bypass surgery. Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said Monday that Yeltsin might return to his office within a week.

"The recuperation process has been going rapidly," Yastrzhemsky said, claiming that Yeltsin spends at least four hours a day outside, goes to a swimming pool and even takes saunas.



NETANYAHU



KISSINGER

Kissinger Says Palestinian State Is Inevitable

WASHINGTON, U.S.A. (AP) - Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said Tuesday that the establishment of a Palestinian state is inevitable.

He also called for wide-ranging negotiations on the future of Israeli settlements and the extent of an Israeli pullback on the West Bank.

In an interview, Kissinger said Israel could not be expected to withdraw to the lines it held before the 1967 Mideast War. In a decisive victory over Arab armies, Israel captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, Gaza from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria.

Kissinger also disagreed with a group of former secretaries of state and other ex-senior U.S. officials for circulating a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu criticizing the Israeli leader's settlements policies.

"It is not right to bring pressure on one side by a group of distinguished, well-known outsiders, and to select one issue," Kissinger said.

While Netanyahu has made some "tactical mistakes," Kissinger said, Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat could also be faulted, by calling for a general strike, for instance.

Kissinger initiated U.S. shuttle diplomacy after the 1973 Mideast War. He brokered two Israeli withdrawals in Sinai and a third on the Golan Heights. The Sinai pullbacks set the stage for a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979.

"My basic view now is that I was very much in favor of a step-by-step approach, but that was 20 years ago," he said. "We have taken so many steps by now the next step should be an overall negotiations."

Israel's settlements on land the Arabs held until 1967 could be discussed in that context, he said. "A Palestinian state is coming into being no matter what anyone says," Kissinger said. "And now there has to be an adjustment of the border. Israel cannot go back to the 1967 border."

President Clinton's public criticism of Israeli settlements Monday broke a long silence and challenges Netanyahu on his peacemaking strategy.

Clinton's description of settlements as an obstacle to peacemaking coincided Monday with a revival of negotiations on Hebron. He also urged Israel and the Palesti-

nians to work out terms for a partial Israeli pullback in the West Bank town.

"We need to get the Hebron agreement over and behind U.S. and go on to other issues," Clinton said at a White House news conference.

Those issues are even more explosive: The future of Jerusalem, where the Palestinians hope to establish a capital, and the 140,000 Israeli Jews who live on the West Bank and Gaza.

On Tuesday, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the talks on Hebron were not making hoped-for progress. His spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said, "We are very disappointed. We feel the elements of an agreement were there."

Clinton left a decision on settlements to the two sides. But he revived a description of settlements as an obstacle to peace. And he implied Israel had broken a commitment to the Palestinians to defer the issue to future negotiations.

Just a few minutes earlier, in a Washington speech, chief U.S. negotiator Dennis B. Ross, implied that Netanyahu's settlements policy was undermining Palestinian confidence in Israel keeping its word. Ross said in a speech that the

most essential ingredient of successful peacemaking in the Middle East was "the parties have to be seen by each other as serious in their commitments to peace."

That requires tough decisions, he said, citing Israel's promise to defer the settlements issue to final-status negotiations.

Netanyahu has not approved new settlements since his election in May, but he has revived subsidies and tax breaks Rabin had canceled in 1992.

"It just stands to reason that anything that pre-empts the outcome of something that both parties have agreed to should be part of the final negotiations cannot be helpful in making peace," Clinton said. "And that's my concern about that."

His criticism followed disclosure of a letter three former secretaries of state and five other former senior U.S. officials had jointly sent to Netanyahu warning that his support for the settlers could have "tragic results."

Addressed to Netanyahu, but intended also as a signal to Clinton, the former officials registered concern that "unilateral actions, such as the expansion of settlements, would be strongly counterproductive to the goal of a negotiated solution."

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U.S. Sends Security Team to Lima, Encourages Talks with Hostage-Takers

WASHINGTON, U.S.A. (AP) - With its security advisers on the ground, the United States set out Thursday to help end a hostage crisis in Peru by encouraging talks but no concessions to guerrillas holding captives in Lima.

Peru won words of praise from President Bill Clinton who said President Alberto Fujimori and his government were "doing their best" to handle the hostage crisis at the Japanese ambassador's residence.

"Obviously we are keeping up with it very closely and we're very concerned about it," Clinton said in his first remarks on the hostage taking since it occurred late Tuesday.

"We're concerned about all those who are held hostage," he said.

But Clinton along with other top officials declined to elaborate amid concerns here that Washington keep a low profile to avoid enflaming the situation.

U.S. officials have also emphasized that responsibility for securing the release of the hostages lay with the Peruvian authorities and with Japan, which has jurisdiction over its diplomatic grounds.

Referring to the delicate nature of ongoing negotiations to free the hostages, Clinton said: "I think the less any of U.S. around the world say ... the better."

Hundreds of hostages including 16 ambassadors remained in the residence, held by some 20 rebels of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Party (MRTA) who managed to slip into the compound during a reception late Tuesday.

The rebels have threatened to kill their hostages unless jailed members of their group are released.

No one has been reported killed in the Drama and an group of four diplomats was allowed to leave the compound late Wednesday to negotiate on their behalf.

The U.S. government has declined to confirm whether there

India Entry Could Make APEC Unwieldy, Mahathir

NEW DELHI, INDIA (Reuters) - Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Friday that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum could become unwieldy if India and other aspiring nations gained admission into the group.

"We want to know, if you admit India, what other countries would qualify," Mahathir told reporters at New Delhi's presidential palace after a ceremony marking the start of his three-day official visit.

"If it becomes a huge organization like the G-77, then it becomes unwieldy," he said, referring to the Group of 77, an interest group of more than 125 developing nations.

APEC currently has a moratorium on new members. India is in a queue to join the 18-member forum that includes countries from Asia, North America and South America which hope to achieve free regional trade by 2020.

lations with India after New Delhi's reforms threw up business opportunities, but it has been seen as stonewalling India's efforts to enter APEC.

Mahathir said Malaysia did not oppose India's entry but said New Delhi must meet conditions to gain an entry. But there were no hard rules, he added.

"If (India) has to practice all those things that APEC is supposed to be. But we are a diverse group. There are no criteria," Mahathir said.

Mahathir later told a meeting of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) that Malaysia could serve as India's gateway to other Southeast Asian markets.

He observed that India was the fifth largest investor in Malaysia and Malaysia was among the top ten investors in India.

"Our two governments will continue to strengthen the institutional arrangements to the private



DEVE GOWDA

India, which launched an economic reform program in 1991 to integrate with the global economy, has been seeking entry into APEC for easier access to South-east Asian markets.

Mahathir, who arrived in New Delhi on Thursday, was received at the presidential palace by Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda. India's efforts to enter APEC were expected to be a key issue to be discussed during their talks later on Friday.

Malaysia is seeking closer relations



MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

sectors of both countries to undertake business on a sustained basis," he said.

Five memorandums of understanding involving the two countries were signed during the business meeting.

Mahathir met Indian ministers including Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral and Vice President K.R. Narayanan on Friday. Later, he was to receive the Jawaharlal Nehru award for international understanding, named after India's first prime minister.

from concerns about the 10,000 Americans living in Peru.

The State Department late Wednesday issued a public announcement calling on Americans to take security precautions in Peru and to avoid the area near the Japanese ambassador's residence where the crisis was unfolding.

At his year-end news conference, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said it was important to keep contact with the hostage-takers but said Peru should not cave into their demands.

"Because so many people are involved, it's important that the lines of communication remain open between those terrorists who have taken the embassy and the Peruvian government," he said.

"We would encourage the maintenance of communications," Christopher said, but added that the United States has a "strong policy against making any concessions."

"We'd advise all those in-

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Bills Pawing at Playoff Gate

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The Buffalo Bills, their shot at a Division title shot, find themselves among four teams fighting for three remaining American Conference playoff berths as the national football league season draws to a close.

The Bills appeared to have the AFC East sewn up three weeks ago, with a four-game winning streak and a 9-3 record.

Then came a three-game skid that left them fighting Jacksonville, Indianapolis and their opponents on Sunday, Kansas City, for a post-season spot.

"We know the situation," said veteran quarterback Jim Kelly. "our playoffs start now."

The Bills were decisively outplayed by Miami on Monday. Coach Marv Levy said the 16-14 score flattered his team.

The Bills gained only 51 yards rushing as both Kelly and running back Thurman Thomas continued to suffer from holes in the offensive line.

Kansas City (9-6) can also earn a wild card berth with a win or a Jacksonville defeat at home to Atlanta.

The Chiefs are trying to make the playoffs for the seventh consecutive season. The last time Kansas City failed to make the playoffs was 1989, when coach Marty Schottenheimer made his debut in Kansas City.

Kansas City's last victory over the Bills was back in 1993, and the Chiefs have not won in Buffalo since 1986.



THURMAN THOMAS

Indianapolis are in with a victory at Cincinnati or a Jaguars defeat. Jacksonville are in with a win and an Indianapolis defeat, as long as Buffalo and Kansas City don't tie.

Jacksonville are aiming to become the second second-year club to make the playoffs, along with the Carolina Panthers.

The Panthers go into the final weekend battling the venerable San Francisco 49ers for the National Conference West title.

The Panthers host Pittsburgh, the team that inspired Carolina's fearsome defense.

Carolina coach Dom Capers was Pittsburgh's defensive coordinator for three seasons. Carolina's League leader in sacks, Kevin Greene, earned two pro bowl appearances in three seasons with the Steelers before joining the Panthers as a free agent this year.

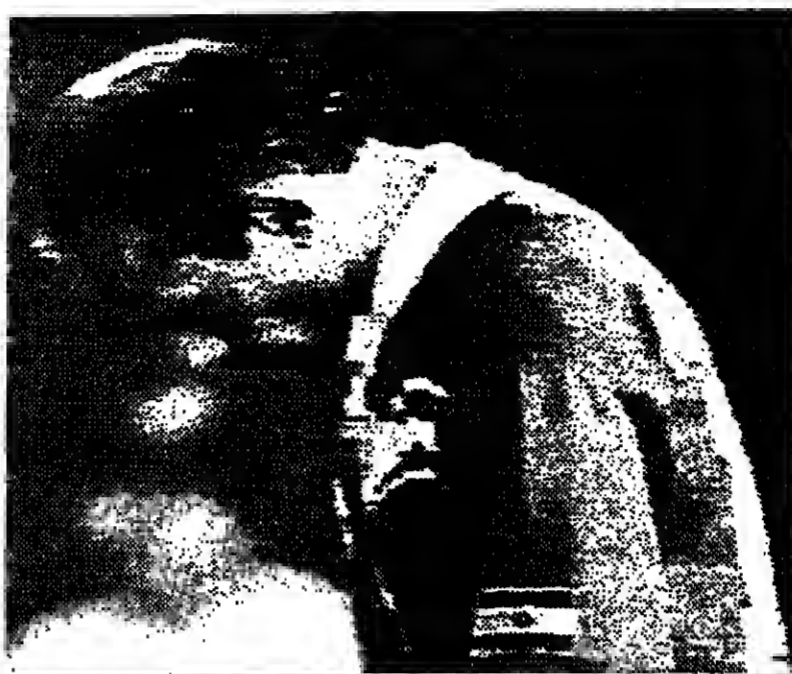
If Carolina beat Pittsburgh, the five-time Super Bowl champion 49ers will be stuck with a wild-card berth, even if they beat lowly Detroit on Monday night.

Only the 1980 Oakland Raiders have won the Super Bowl from a wild-card slot.

In other games, AFC East champions New England visit the struggling New York Giants, AFC West champs Denver head to San Diego with Broncos tailback Terrell Davis poised to claim the League rushing title.

Super bowl champions Dallas said after clinching the NFC East title that they planned to take it easy on Sunday in Washington, while NFC Central winners Green Bay take on Division runners-up Minnesota.

LOST



PENALTIES

Lara Philosophical After Unusual Dismissal

WANGARATTA, AUSTRALIA (Reuters) - Brian Lara played down his latest controversial dismissal on Friday after finally discovering some form on West Indies' tour of Australia.

Lara scored 86 on the second day of the four-day game against Victoria, but the manner of his dismissal prompted questions from West Indian players and management.

The world record-holder was given out his wicket after sending away a rising delivery from pace bowler David Saker and setting off for two runs.

Victorian players appealed to on-field umpires Bob Stratford and Bill Sheahan when Lara, who had watched the ball fly over the slips cordon, started running.

Stratford, standing at square leg, referred the appeals to third umpire Geoff Morrow and Morrow gave Lara out after watching television replays which indicated the 27-year-old left-hander had trodden on his wicket when he started running.

"I hope this is the last piece of bad luck I can have on this tour," Lara later told reporters.

"I enjoyed my stay out there, that's the main thing. The umpire had to make his decision. I was a bit unlucky," he said.

Both West Indies coach Malcolm Marshall and wicketkeeper Junior Murray, who is not playing in the match, later questioned the umpires about the dismissal.

It came under section a of law 35 of the laws of cricket, which states that a batsman is out if he breaks his wicket "...in setting off for his first run, immediately after playing, or playing at, the ball."

Lara had appeared on course for his first century on tour after racing from 43 to 86 in 22 balls. He hit 33 from two overs by leg-spinner Brad Stacey, including eight fours and a single.

His dismissal overshadowed an improved performance by West Indies, who reached 312 for five at the close in response to Victoria's first innings total of 354.

Jimmy Adams was 43 not out, building on the good work of opener Sherwin Campbell who made a brisk 80.

Lara had scored just 374 runs at an average of 26.7 on tour going into the game.

He was reprimanded by team officials after storming into the Australian dressing room to protest his dismissal during the second test.

Moment of Truth for Liverpool

LONDON (AFP) - Liverpool have a chance to underline their championship credentials and show they are more than just a team of basement club bullies when they travel to title rivals Newcastle on Monday.

Liverpool, the most successful club in English football, returned to the top of the Premiership last week with thumping wins over Middlesbrough and Nottingham Forest, scoring nine goals in the process.

The almost casual manner in which they dispatched their opponents was seen as proof, in some quarters, that the Reds are on the verge of fulfilling their unquestionable promise by storming unchallenged towards their 19th title.

But as the leading clubs start to make a break from the pack for the championship line, Liverpool know that Monday's match will be a defining moment in the race.

Last year, a dreadful run of form in November left their slick young side with too much to catch up and they are well aware that a similar slump over the hectic Christmas period could once again bury their hopes.

The wins over bottom club Forest and struggling Boro may have been a welcome boost to the 'goal difference' column in the table, as well as to team morale, but were not exactly a true test of their pedigree.

That will come on Monday at St. James Park, which will be packed to the rafters with 36,000 near-hysterical Geordies willing an out-of-form Newcastle back to winning ways.

Newcastle have taken just three points from their last five games and hit a new low with a 2-1 defeat at relegation favorites Coventry on Tuesday.

And Newcastle manager Kevin

Keegan would be lying if he said he felt entirely comfortable at the prospect of his rickety defense holding up under the pressure of Liverpool goal machine Robbie Fowler.

Fowler set a new Liverpool record by reaching 102 goals in just 165 games, one game quicker to the century mark than Anfield legend Ian Rush, with four successful strikes against Middlesbrough.

The leaders, though, will take nothing for granted against a Newcastle side who have Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand, their \$35 million strike force, back in action after injury.

"With Newcastle losing at Coventry we have opened up a gap at the top of the table but now must go to their place and win on Monday," says Liverpool's keeper David James.

"We're not getting over-excited. We know that Newcastle are a class side going through a bad spell. That can happen to any team," he added.

The St. James's Park encounter is the most significant fixture of the weekend program but before then Arsenal have the chance to go back to the top with a visit to crisis club Forest on Saturday.

Forest, currently bottom of the table and without a win since the opening day of the season, were plunged into fresh turmoil on Thursday when manager Frank Clark walked out, claiming he had run out of ideas to help the cash-strapped club.

Forest are in desperate need of new players but no money will be available until a takeover of the club is completed in the new year.

Third-placed Wimbledon will be hoping to stretch their incredible run to 20 matches without defeat when they travel to Aston Villa on Sunday.

Reigning champions Manchester United enter the crucial Christmas program with a home match against in-form Sunderland nine points adrift of leaders Liverpool in sixth place.

And after dropping 15 points in their last eight games, United manager Alex Ferguson knows that a poor showing over the festive period will almost certainly end their hopes of winning a fourth title in five years.

West Ham manager Harry Redknapp has the difficult task of lifting his players after they slumped to a humiliating 2-1 League Cup defeat at Second Division Stockport in midweek.

But the atmosphere of a London Derby occasion at a capacity Stamford Bridge may be sufficient incentive against Chelsea whose cosmopolitan outfit are themselves still reeling from a 3-0 drubbing by Sunderland's worthy journeymen last Sunday.

..... Asia Dominate Rackets Scene

PARIS (AFP) - Asia virtually dominated the Racket sport scene in 1996, winning nine out of the 11 individual world or Olympic titles on offer.

Only Denmark's Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen, who won the badminton men's singles crown in Atlanta and Australia's women's world squash champion Sarah Fitz-Gerald prevented a complete clean sweep by Asia.

China came out top with five victories including all four table tennis Olympics golds, men's singles and doubles and women's singles and doubles, plus another gold in badminton's women's doubles.

South Korea earned two badminton golds in women's singles

and mixed doubles, and Indonesia came up trumps in the men's doubles.

Meanwhile Pakistan's Jansher Khan won his eighth world open squash title and fifth in the row to confirm his legendary status in the world's most exhausting racket sport.

But perhaps China's domination of world table tennis was the major rackets story this year.

The Chinese followed up their clean sweep of all seven team and individual medals at last year's world championships with four golds at the centennial games to herald in another era of invincibility.

China were the dominant

power in the men's game for decades until 1989 when Sweden won the first of their three successive world team championships and the blue riband singles crown passed from Sweden's Jan-Ove Waldner to compatriot Jorgen Persson and then Jean-Philippe Gatin of France.

That ageing trio were eclipsed in Atlanta, Waldner and Persson embarrassingly so, where 20-year-old Liu Guoliang took gold in both men's singles and men's doubles, with world singles champion Kong Linghui.

In all China won four golds, three silvers and a bronze, a tally that had their coaches virtually dancing with joy around the tables.

China had targetted the men's singles crown, won by South Korea's Yoo Nam-Kyu in 1988 and Waldner four years later, and meeting their goal had them in ecstasy.

China's Deng Yaping was, like Liu, also a singles and doubles Olympic champion, winning the women's doubles with Qiao Hong.

Then in Nimes, France in October, Liu won the world cup at the expense of Waldner to add this coveted championship to his Olympic gold.

Kong Linghui, not to be outdone, beat Lui, also his roommate at the table tennis training center in Beijing, to lift the Asian championships gold on December 10.

